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SUMMER 1998

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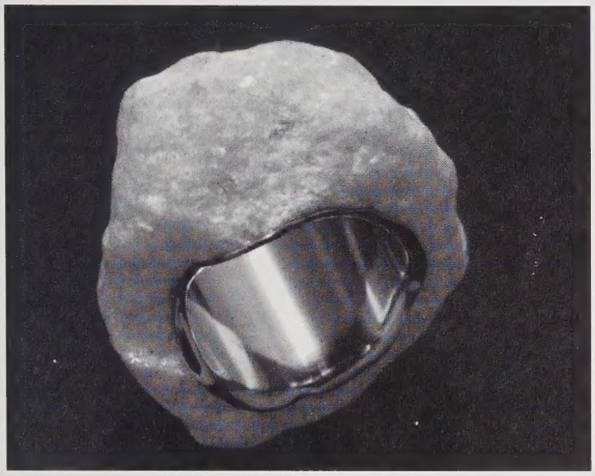

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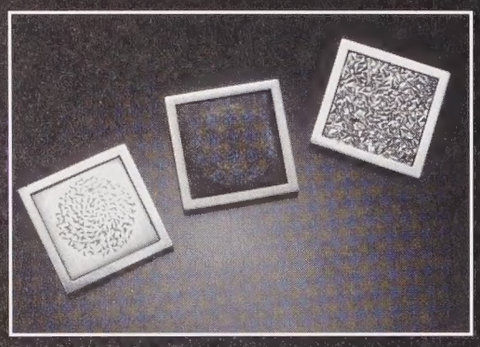

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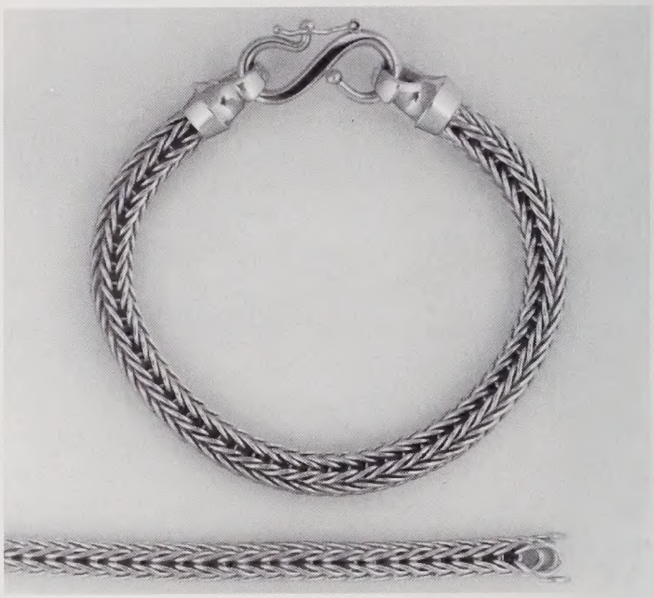

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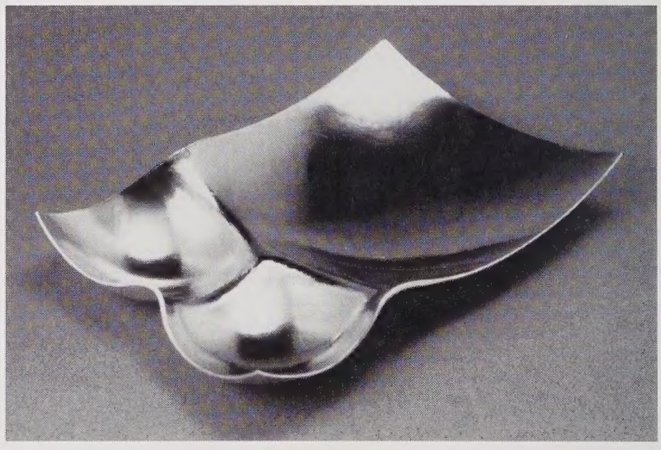

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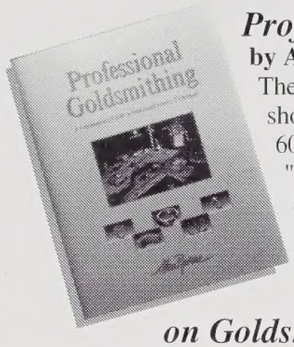

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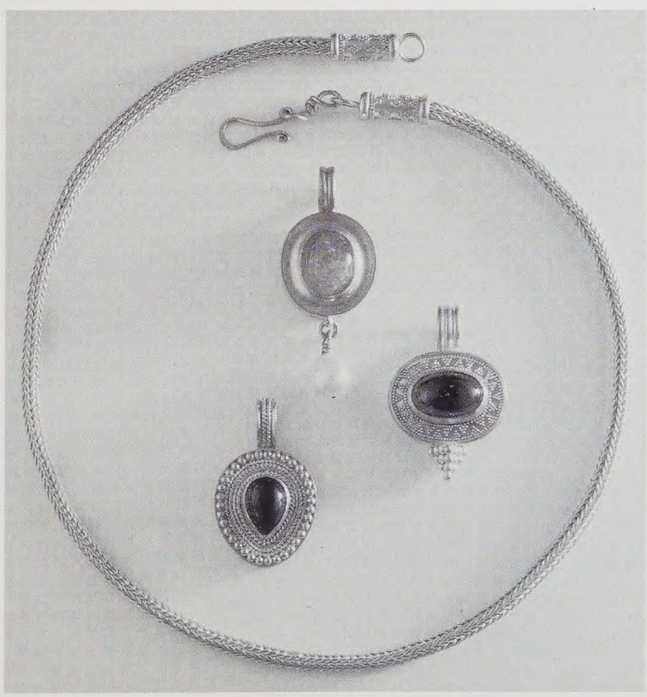

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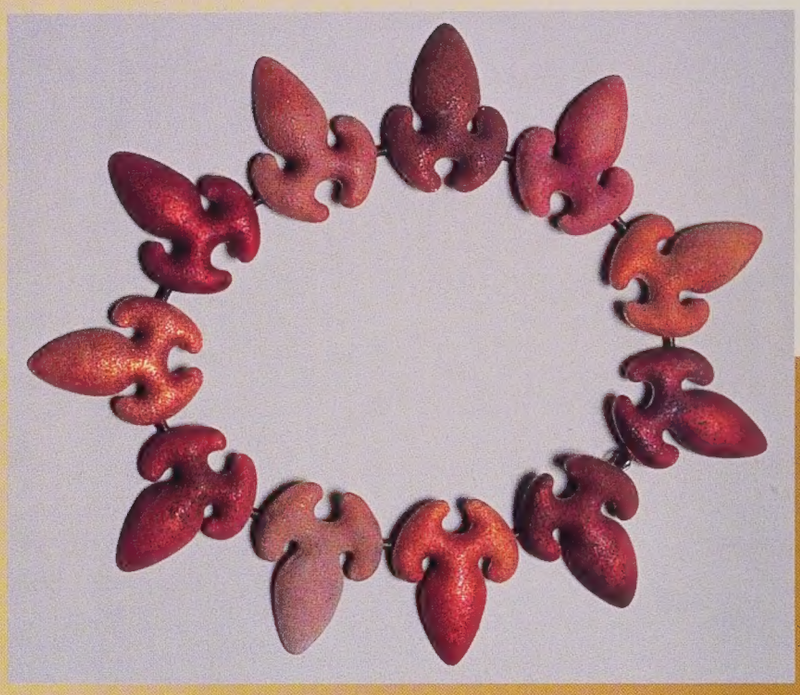

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Kate Wagle
(somewhat) Over Wrought, 1997
handkerchief, graphite, 24k, silver, Lucite, paint
hankerchief: 8 x 8 x 1"
wrist object: 2 x 2 x 2"
Photograph by Richard Gehrke
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Above
Shana Kroiz
Crown of Thorns (Necklace), 1994
enamel, silver, rubber
15 x 15 x 1/2"

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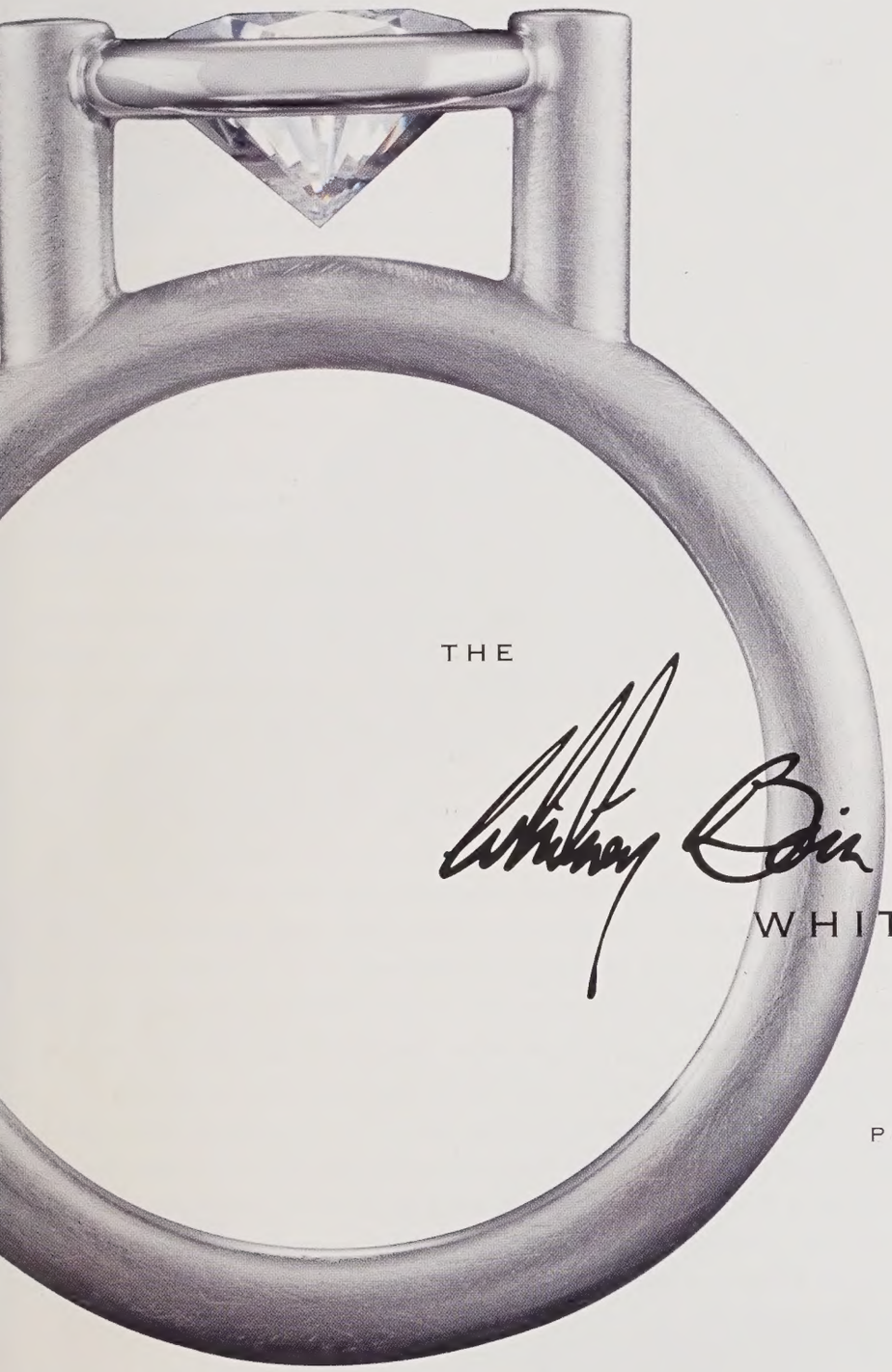

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Address editorial material to:
Frank C. Lewis, Editor
Metalsmith
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Editorial

What is style? How and why does a particular configuration of processes, materials, attitudes, narratives, and/or forms come to be identified as a style? When I write *Scandinavian Modern* or *West Coast Funk*, most of us probably have very similar mental pictures. In fact, we would probably easily agree on the names of particular artists who would fall under one of these rubrics.

Some critics and practitioners have the knowledge to be able to map the lines of influence and the professional relationships which contribute to a stylistic school. They are able to make astute connections between forms, materials, and practices. But often a dependance on historical categories blinds us to other aspects of a work. In the process of writing history, stylistic categories and their influences and developments inevitably ignore certain qualities of any given work. Styles and the notion of a collectivity of intent associated with styles and specific periods of time often preclude consideration of an individual object. Often it is marginalized as something which does not speak to or about its specific epoch.

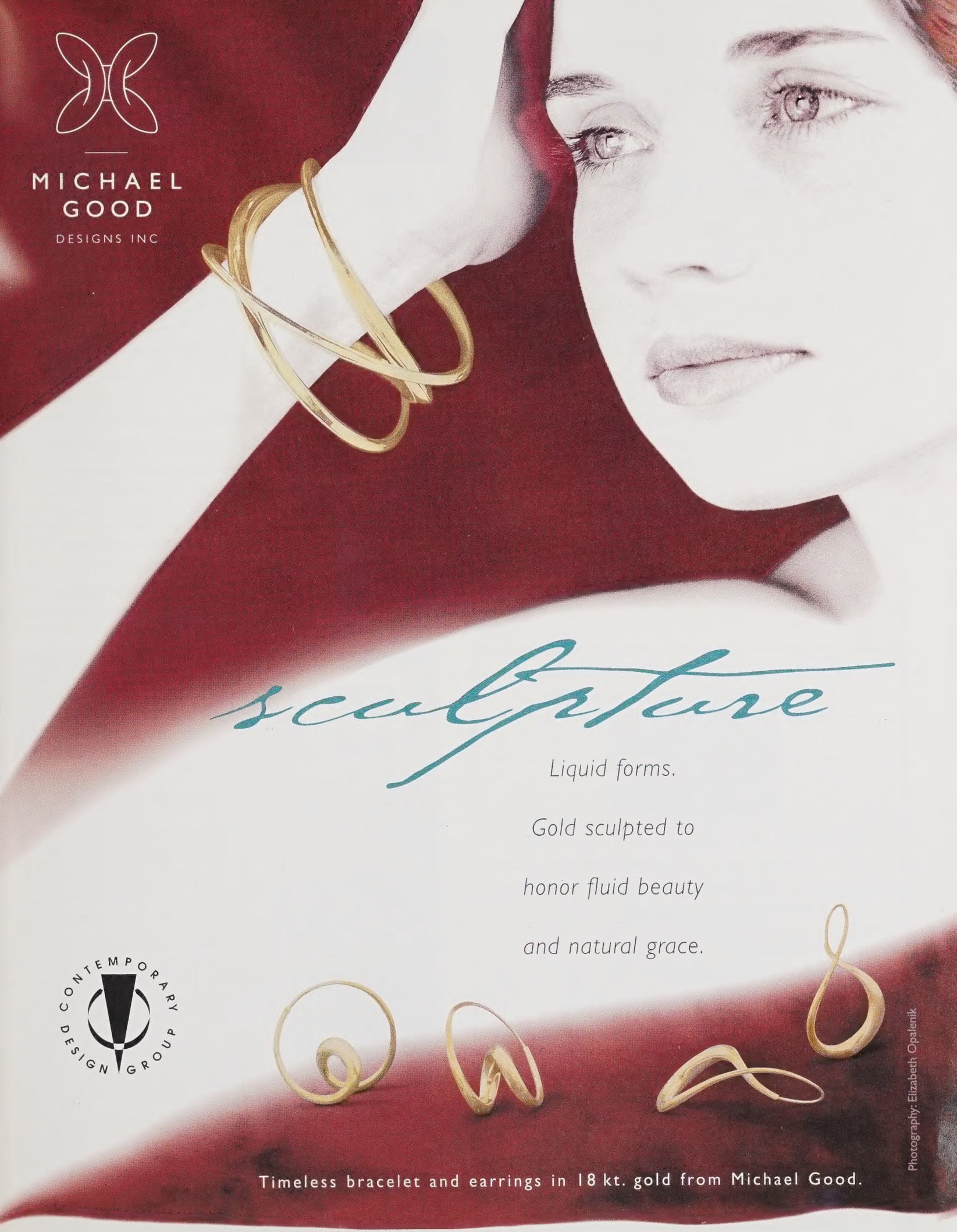
Artists that do not fit into the *logical order* of styles are ignored or only footnoted as anomalies. Stylistic designations do not allow for the singular, the particular, the inexplicable. A lazy identification of stylistic qualities will sometimes eliminate the significance of an individual's contributions to a field. Historians may eventually reevaluate an artist's work and label him or her a precursor of a later style, or a *proto*-whatever, as if a craftsperson in the 1950s was clairvoyant enough to understand what would be the issue of the seventies. But this solution ends up contradicting the usefulness of stylistic designations in the first place.

All of this labeling and categorizing can be helpful to those of us who subscribe to the ideas that all of the arts and crafts are communicative, and that all artists are a product of their times. Styles help us to articulate trends and weigh some of the influences of culture; but we must be wary when certain styles are posited as absolute, historically inevitable, or superior.

Whether styles and their designations are a product of the *Zeitgeist*, or, as I sometimes believe, simply the product of habit, a desire for simplicity, and conceptual laziness, they become both descriptive and proscriptive. I am always uncomfortable when I hear or read that the history of jewelry dictates a particular approach or that certain works are unworthy of consideration because they engage a style that is out of date, stale, or not relevant to their times. Such authoritative statements imply an agenda, not of history but of the author. History and styles are not chapters in a single correct narrative. They are instead partial and suggested narratives, which at their best can only answer some questions, not all. Styles are interesting and helpful. They function as organizational tools and categories. They are not gospel.

Neither artists nor works exist outside of time. But we must all remember that history is messy, conflicted, and protean. Styles can offer us the confortable illusion of order. They can often be employed as a means of communicating with a group of like minded individuals. But we must all be wary of the style which seems to answer all of our questions about history, because somewhere behind that tidy history, a lot of other equally interesting and relevant histories are being overlooked.

FCL



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Recent Sightings

Bruce Metcalf

Recent Sightings: New Domestic Silver at the R.C.A.

I recently visited the Royal College of Art in London, as a guest of Professor David Watkins and the Goldsmithing, Silversmithing, Metalwork and Jewellery Department. I was particularly intrigued with one of their academic initiatives, called "New Domestic Silver." This is a program in which incoming students (all of whom are graduate level) can select silversmithing as a specialized subject for their two-year course of study.

Watkins designed the program in response to a number of problems that he saw in the field of metalsmithing. First, the industrial base of silversmithing in England has gone into a precipitous decline in the last few decades, suggesting that the market for silverware is disappearing. In addition, the decline of the English industry means that very few design jobs will be available for RCA graduates. At the same time, Watkins sensed an opportunity: the prosperous middle class has become increasingly interested in high-quality objects that can be used in daily life. As evidence, he could point to the enormous growth of the markets for upscale cars, gourmet foods, cookware, and even fine cigars. Under these conditions, Watkins asked, why shouldn't people be interested in silverware for their homes? He does not believe that silversmithing must necessarily be a "marginal and outmoded activity."[1]

Thus the New Domestic Silver project was created. In this course, students research many different aspects of the practice of silversmithing. Students usually arrive at the RCA with a sound education in traditional hammerwork, but the program expands their technical expertise. During their first year, students explore production technologies that might be encountered in the silversmithing industry. Each student must design and produce an object in a limited-production series. The RCA studio is ideally equipped for this assignment: it has equipment for spinning, steel die-making, pressing, computer-aided design, and rapid prototyping.

The study of silversmithing is not limited to technical exploration: there is also an intellectual component to the program. Students focus on two problematic aspects of silverware in contemporary society:

1. The "cultural" issue - why silver is not more commonly used and enjoyed at a domestic level in our (UK) culture - how we should interpret this, and how we might develop tactics to challenge the prejudices, perceptions, and poverty of sensibility which lie behind it.
2. The "design" issue - what can be done to develop a highly focused, mobile, high quality, and confident design ethic which will open up this apparently in tractable situation."[2]

Presumably, these discussions center on how silverware can be made more relevant to contemporary lifestyles, and how designers can adjust to these new social realities. A particular emphasis is placed on making the silver both satisfying and pleasantly surprising to use. Unfortunately, I was not in London long enough to see how the students were responding to these issues.

I should also mention that Watkins sees marketing as an important aspect of practice, a point that is often overlooked in American art education. Obviously, most people have no interest whatsoever in buying or using silver, and a young silversmith faces a glacial indifference from society. But Watkins is adamant that this project is not merely an academic exercise, and he does not expect that his graduates make only showpieces. The Domestic Silver Project emphasizes use – genuine use in the home – and it would be pointless for the graduates to think of themselves as artists, making objects whose final destination is the gallery or museum. As a result, Watkins talks about the need for aggressive self-promotion and the need to create a new public awareness of contemporary silversmithing. His point is not as far-fetched as it might sound. After all, the postwar American craft revival made a marketplace for handmade objects where none had existed before.

Beyond the revival of silversmithing, the Domestic Silver Project is intended to address the current state of education in the crafts. Watkins is acutely aware that craft education must offer a sound rationale for its existence in higher education. Because the Royal College of Art can - and does - eliminate any program the administration feels has become ineffective or irrelevant, Watkins must constantly defend his Department. Even more so than most American Professors, Watkins must justify and explain his efforts.

Watkins believes that the focus of craft education is moving away from practice and toward theory, and he hopes to offer a counter-measure. In the United States, most of the educational news is made by teachers who try to align their jewelry and metalsmithing programs with the fine arts, and defend their efforts with the concepts and language of the presumed art world's "cutting-edge." Such schemes deploy the methodologies of current scholarship (semiotics, post-structuralism, and deconstruction), and they emphasize the fact that craft can become a discourse about itself. Needless to say, this approach leads to an strong emphasis on the conceptual, with ideas given relatively more importance than the traditional virtues of technique, design, genuine use, and marketing.

Watkins is critical of this approach. As he says, "I would preserve the subject before the education." By this, he means that

continued on page 10

continued from page 9

the subject - silversmithing and jewelrymaking - remains his first priority. And since the subject is necessarily a practice, a specific activity grounded in both technique and social usage, the practice must be given pride of place in a curriculum. Watkins believes that a craft department must remain closely tied to its traditional practice, or it risks becoming a mere academic exercise and ultimately collapsing. In fact, Watkins points to a University craft program in England that tried to justify its continued existence by neglecting craft practice and emphasizing the conceptual aspects of object-making. That program was recently closed by the administration. In this case, the justification that craft is a discourse failed. To Watkins, the "cutting-edge" approach has an inherent risk: the possibility of extinction.

So, the Domestic Silver Project is intended to serve as a educational model. While he does not ignore the intellectual component of craft education, Watkins places a clear emphasis on the practice and the social utility of silversmithing. The Project is only three years old, so it is impossible to measure its success, either in producing a crop of energetic young silversmiths, or in providing a persuasive model for craft education. But it's an interesting experiment - one that will certainly bear watching.

[1] Jamie Bennett, "Jewelry Mediating Jewelry", Metalsmith, Winter 1998, Vol. 18, No. 1.

[2] From a statement issued by the Goldsmithing, Silversmithing, Metalwork and Jewellry Department of the RCA, 1996.

Letters

3/19/97

Dear Editor:

I am writing in response to Bruce Metcalf's piece "A New Golden Age" in the Winter 1997 issue of *Metalsmith*. Unfortunately, I did not see the two statements upon which he was commenting, but I would like to add my voice to his, and perhaps to bring a further argument to his defense of hand-work.

Hand work is indeed a valuable and defensible part of the creative process. The act of making focuses the mind on the task and confronts the artist/designer directly with the thing they are creating.

More important than any of this, however, is the maker's relationship with their materials and processes. The history of technology is the history of making, of using hands and tools to manipulate materials. Only by physically manipulating them can you come to any understanding of their capabilities, and be able to exploit that understanding. I do not reject the use of computer-aided design and manufacture, but I do not think they replace hand-work. Computers are just tools and, like any other tool, they have strengths and weaknesses. Things that are made will inevitably reflect the tools that made them, and this is as true of computer-related methods as it is of hammers. That, surely is the point - computer-designed and made pieces look like exactly that. There is no shame in this, anymore than there is in hand-made things looking hand-made. They are just not the same kinds of things, and the world has plenty of room for both!

Yours faithfully
Michael Pinder

4/28/97

Dear Editor:

I found the commentary in "Recent Sightings" by Bruce Metcalf (Spring 1997) quite interesting and felt compelled to respond. This is something I rarely ever do, but, because of the nature of the commentary, I was inclined to share my version of the love for what I do and how I express that to my customers, galleries and in other informational materials.

I found the commentary timely, in that I sometimes question whether it is *appropriate* for me to speak of the love I have for this art. I am convinced that to not speak of it is an injustice to not only myself but to those who purchase my designs and wish to know more about the artist and what actually motivates us. When I finally found that this is what I truly love to do (this took nearly 40 years!), am absorbed by it, thrive in its complexities, and am eager to learn more . . . I began encouraging others to find the thing that sustains our passion, that contains tremendous meaning to one's life's *work* and to become engaged to it; for all else seems to fall into place when you finally find that which you *love*.

The problem of not being able to *express* this love (*properly*, it seems), for many, comes when we decide to speak about ourselves. Which is what this sort of expression entails. It means we must be open, which leaves us vulnerable to *attack*. We must be able to endure the remarks of others who will call our statements egocentric, self-absorbed, and even "mushiness or psycho babble", et cetera . . . This could be why so many choose *not* to speak of such things. To be able to express our feelings and to not let ourselves be affected by remarks (*bad* or *good*), to continue to love and *work* within this art form, for what it brings to our life and our inner self, is the greatest challenge. For, in the end, if it is truly what we love to do, *no* remark will sway us from our passion.

When one puts into words, one's feelings, it just seems to sound so silly, mushy and selfish. Why are we made to feel that feelings of love and passion are *mushy*? Is it that *feminist* thing? I tend to want to continuously change what I have put into words, even though it may be the *truth*. To *tone down* the feelings that I have, which is *dishonest*. None of the artist statements I have submitted has been without my feelings and expressions for this art form. Unfortunately, in our culture today, feelings and emotions that are anything but anger and angst seems out of place. Still, I continue to include my feelings, knowing that it is accepted by those who are *most important*; those who truly love my designs and those who actually purchase them. You see, I actually get paid for doing what I truly love to do! But, I know that this is not the reason I pursue this art form; it is but one of the *perks* of the arts and should not be diminished in any way!

Thank you for such an impressive magazine and for listening to my comments. It is informative, luscious, classy and inspiring and I thoroughly enjoy it when it arrives. This too is an art form!!

Deborah Hamm

12/20/97

Dear Editor:

As an educator as well as a participant in the *Metalsmith 1996 Exhibition in Print* I regret the fact that the participation in the 1998 publication is limited to SNAG members only.

I understand the importance of signing up new memberships but believe that using the application for *EIP* in this regard is a shortsighted decision. *EIP* as a forum to - I cite the 1996 introduction - "seek out and reproduce some of the best and most innovative examples of North American metalwork" will certainly not gain significance and quality through an isolation process like this. Also SNAG members can only profit from viewing a whole breadth of work made outside familiar circles. Growth of various kinds is based on openness and exposure, on inclusion not exclusion.

Sincerely,
Barbara Seidenath

12/3/97

Dear Editor:

I have thought a long time about my ideas on production versus one-of-a-kind work and of course the most recent *Metalsmith Exhibition in Print* caused me to ponder these thoughts further. I really appreciated the issue, especially what Donald Friedlich wrote on the subject. I have the highest regard for production artists and have many times told students that production work is certainly not below them but rather way over their heads. Doing it well is not easy. I have always considered production to be synonymous with efficiency and a business-like manner along with exquisite design - a threesome I have certainly never been able to master.

But I do envy the art of poets and authors. They can create a one-of-a-kind piece, reproduce it for the masses yet still give each person who reads it a unique, one-of-a-kind experience. Why is the art of the object so different? Imagine instead of printing the original poem over and over using a press, the poet kept trying to rewrite each multiple. Of course the poem would go stale. Once it is perfect, it cannot be said better. So perhaps the art in production with regards to the object is to keep the integrity of the flawless design throughout its replication, similar to the ink on the page of a book.

Of course, words and materials are not the same. Not all working styles are so easily reproduced. When I try to repeat designs, I am always left feeling like I've minimalized my connection with the image. Maybe it has to do with the fact that my work is so much about process and discovery, and repeating the steps feels redundant. The work simply does not look the same when I know what to expect. My pieces are not special because of their design much of the time but because they expose the honesty in their making. Or maybe Michael Good is right, they really are not worth repeating. Yet I do believe some experiences can only be done once, like your first swim in the ocean or that first kiss. Some stages we simply outgrow and cannot retain, such as the beautiful voices in a boys choir. But then I do find that listening to a scratchy, old recording of my favorite song is many times more genuine then hearing the older musician play that same song live, long after it was first recorded. The discovery is missing in the latter, yet forever captured in the scratchy reproduction.

All of this simply brings up the human attraction towards uniqueness. It is not that the one-of-a-kind object is so much better. It is just that not everything can be reproduced with equal integrity.

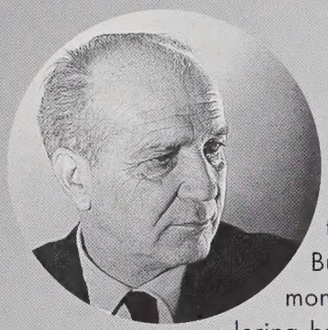
Sincerely,
Deborah Lozier

Paul Fèher

1898-1990-Master Ironwork Designer -

How a 19th-Century Education leads to a Successful 20th-Century Career

text by Joan Kahr



Paul Fèher remembered drawing on the floor of the Zola railroad station in 1902, in a small town 250 miles from Budapest, waiting for his father to return from Paris where he worked one month at a time for the couturier Paul Poiret. The senior Fèher had a family tailoring business (started by his wife's Italian father) that made the intricate military uniforms for the Hungarian army. Although he could not have known it at the time, young Paul's fate would be intricately linked with Paris.

Paul continued drawing throughout his childhood and after he completed high school at the age of fourteen, his father placed him in an interior decorating shop. There, two senior designers taught him to draw in perspective with water colors, whetting his appetite for the decorative arts. Despite paternal objections, the young man took the entrance exams for the Industrial Arts Academy of Budapest in 1912. Because he was accepted with high honors, the state paid for his five-year education (1914 to 1919). In spite of the first World War and a scarcity of food, the state continued the program, knowing that its graduates would help the Hungarian economy after the war.

For the young man (the third of twelve children) whose modest family did not even have a painting on the wall, the academy opened a wide vista of culture and accomplishment. Paul was so stimulated by the experience that he hardly noticed the five-mile walk to the academy and back. The school, part of a complex comprised of a library and a small museum used by the professors and their 300 pupils, had a curriculum that was intense and varied.

Foremost, the history of art from cave painting to contemporary work (1915) was offered. Paul remembered the class ending with the study of painter Kees Van Dongen (b.1877). In the decorative arts course, Art Nouveau, which was highly disdained, was passed over; however, Danziger baroque was a popular style embraced by the faculty.

Drawing classes were divided into three three-hour sections: drawing nudes from live models, quick sketches in pen and ink which were timed, and portraits executed with pencil, charcoal, and color media. In conjunction with drawing, oil painting classes covered three major areas: the history of oils, all types of painting techniques, and the completion of history paintings and landscape paintings.

Fèher fondly recalled Professor Alexander Papp who taught stage design. Papp stressed the importance of presentation drawings and maquette-making for the perusal of perspective clients. Another course emphasized pattern making for textiles and wall papers. This related to scenic design involving landscapes, oriental scenes, and park scenes which at the time were also popular wallpaper motifs. All these designs, completely detailed and colored, were submitted to the professor.

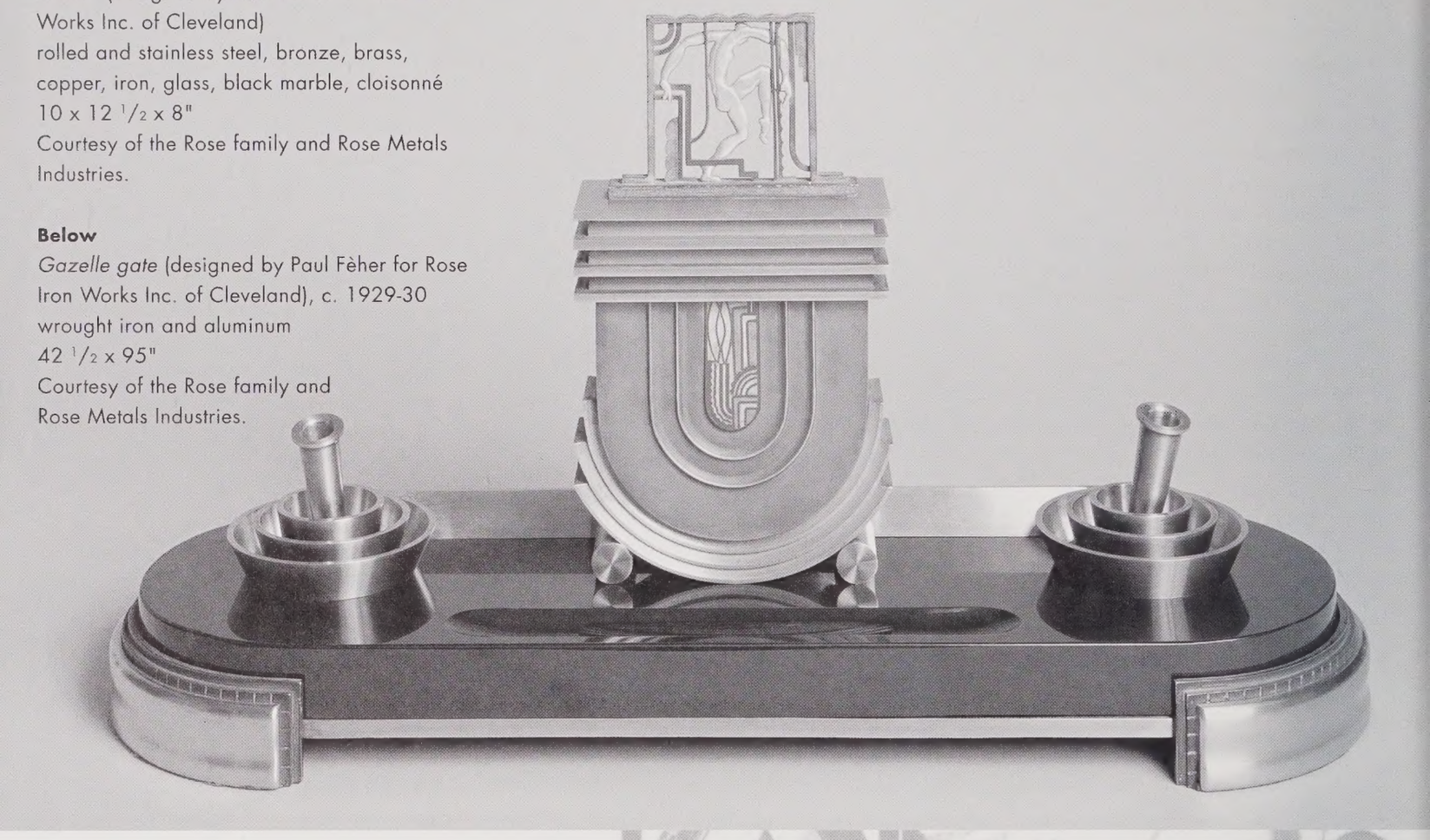
Calligraphy class, which explored classical Grecian lettering, and Gothic and modern script, was closely related to children's book design, with special attention paid to German, English, and French books. Paul called this area "Fairyland," a big field which many people followed after graduation.

Above
Paul Fèher age 40, 1938.

Opposite page
Grill (displayed at the 1930 May show at the Cleveland Museum of Art, designed by Paul Fèher for Rose Iron Works Inc.)
wrought iron, aluminum, brass
62 1/2" h.
Courtesy of the Rose family and Rose Metals Industries.

Inkwell (designed by Paul Fèher for Rose Iron Works Inc. of Cleveland)
rolled and stainless steel, bronze, brass, copper, iron, glass, black marble, cloisonné
10 x 12 1/2 x 8"
Courtesy of the Rose family and Rose Metals Industries.

Below
Gazelle gate (designed by Paul Fèher for Rose Iron Works Inc. of Cleveland), c. 1929-30
wrought iron and aluminum
42 1/2 x 95"
Courtesy of the Rose family and Rose Metals Industries.



At this time many older male students went off to the war and never returned or were never able to complete their studies. Those who remained worked hard in spite of a sustenance diet of cabbage soup and bread. Despite meager supplies, the students rallied for the many class competitions in which Paul was a frequent winner.

Perhaps the most important course for Fèher was the drawing of furniture styles including Egyptian, Grecian, and Roman. The English styles, especially Chippendale and Hepplewhite were the most important styles to learn. According to Fèher the only contemporary furniture taught was German because Hungarian pieces were "heavy peasant styles and not very comfortable or attractive." Professor Szabjai Frichauf, a fine 50-year-old artist who trained in France and England, taught this course. Decades later Fèher remembered Frichauf and many other professors with great affection and he could still describe their personalities and talents.

Fèher recalled enthusiastically that exterior architecture was taught by Professor Bolog Lorand, a prominent Budapest architect, who versed his students in the design of classical Grecian, Renaissance, and Modern house facades. Exercises included designing an amusement park, a school, and a playground. Interior architecture was a separate study focusing on the design of large railway stations, opera houses, and meeting halls. Fèher's project was to create a movie house drawn to scale, including furniture, color scheme, and accessories. This training was well utilized by Fèher later on for his many interior designs and houses.

This extraordinary curriculum included anatomy class in which students learned how to draw the body by looking at dissected cadavers. For good measure a doctor taught health and apprised the students about venereal disease prevention.

Literature classes offered a respite from hands-on endeavors. Students read Rousseau, Tolstoy, Hugo, and German works as well. Geometry class was of primary importance in the Budapest school as it was in art schools throughout Europe.

In jewelry design and fabrication the students worked primarily with silver, as gold was too costly. From there they went on to printing class where they learned about wood blocks and lithography, as well as copper and zinc etching techniques with an emphasis on producing advertisements.

Yet more skills were learned in the woodworking shop. Each student had to fashion a drawer and a door using both hand tools and power tools. Also taught was the mixing and application of chemical finishes. Some other products that were made included dressing tables, jewel cases, portable desks, and small chairs for which the apprentices designed the upholstery materials. Here small pieces such as hinges, handles, and locks were fashioned from sheet iron or cast in brass or bronze. There was also forge work but only small objects were made, never large gates. They had oxy-acetylene welding torches but it was too early for electric welding. Little did Fèher realize the importance that his metal working instruction would have on his later career.

Appreciating his talents and recognizing his need for money, several professors secured design jobs for Fèher before he finished school. Paul was anxious to help his mother Ida, who still had many children living at home. "She was everything to me," he recounted. Undoubtedly the young man wanted to succeed to please the woman who had championed his case for entering the Academy.

After five years at the school a graduate examination was

held - each student was put in a separate room and given a subject to design. After four hours they submitted their sketches, which, if accepted, had to be turned into final scale renderings and paintings. This was an exhilarating challenge. Fèher produced a complete project and graduated with high honors. Years later when Paul returned to his alma mater for a visit, one of his architecture professors said "You're my genius - the only student who really listened to what I said."

Paul Fèher left for Paris in 1923. He was befriended by Gaspar Setlek, a Czech who had been educated in Hungary. Setlek worked for the ironsmith Edgar Brandt initially, and later on for himself. Paul immediately got a job designing in a furniture atelier. By chance Fèher went to the Grand Palais to see the setting up of a Salon exposition dedicated to the decorative arts. Happening on the booth of the ferronnier, Paul Kiss, he looked around at the ironwork. He said to his countryman Kiss, "I just arrived from Hungary, I like to design and I can do better than this." Paul Kiss told him to come around to the shop and they would talk. He already had two French designers but after seeing Fèher's sample designs, Kiss fired the Frenchmen, invited Fèher to stay on, and promptly doubled his salary. Kiss asked the younger man to design lanterns for interiors and exteriors. Much to the surprise of both men the fixtures flew out of the shop as soon as they were made.

Years later Fèher said about his debut in *fer forgé*, "I was young and ambitious, so I tried to make a very clear, presentable drawing. I did not look back to old styles like Gothic; I made my own contemporary designs."

According to Fèher, "Kiss was the greatest forgeron I ever knew." However, since Kiss had little creative ability, their collaboration was mutually advantageous. After training in Transylvania, Rumania (then part of Hungary), Paul Kiss opened a rudimentary blacksmith shop where he made horseshoes and small objects. He came to Paris before the great war in order to earn more money. After several years he was able to open his own atelier. When clients came to the shop Kiss would "take off his jacket, pick up a piece of iron and forge a large leaf that they could use for an ashtray." It was a magical performance and the clients never failed to be impressed. The collaboration between Fèher and Kiss was so successful that Kiss was spoken of as *the* competitor of Edgar Brandt, the acknowledged premier *forgeron* of the Art Deco period.

In the 1920s there were approximately twenty-five men in the Kiss shop, as well as a bookkeeper and a receptionist. The smiths came from many countries. There were Swedes, Italians, Germans, and of course many Hungarians whom Fèher felt could assemble his pieces better then anyone else. These men were overseen by a *contremâitre* who also made all the frameworks for the commissions and distributed supplies to the workers. In commencing his work, Fèher would make a full scale drawing of a design. Kiss always knew immediately what kind of work it would entail and whether it was the right design for his style, noted for its prominent hammer marks. Next Fèher would draw the design on tole (sheet metal) with white paint. This became the ironsmiths' pattern. They could match up their work to the drawing and the tole would not burn from being exposed to the hot iron, as would paper. Everything was made by hand; the oxy-acetylene torch was used only for assembling certain complex pieces. Fèher stated that his jewelry and metal classes at the Academy did not prepare him for ironwork, "it was such a special line." Fèher learned quickly by watching Kiss and his men forge. By the time of the *1925 Exposition des Arts Décoratifs et Industriels Modernes* Fèher was a great ironwork designer and his talent was recognized by his peers when a *Kiss Bird of Paradise* radiator grill won First Prize for Metalwork. This work took many men two months to forge.

Other popular items designed by Fèher were entrance foyer console tables with calling card holders, an important item since everyone presented his or her card when they came to call at homes or offices. Paul designed hundreds of radiator covers at a time when central heating was being widely accepted. Lamps, torchères, and sconces were very important and they were made in every size. Interestingly, the shades were always alabaster and not the hand blown glass that was more frequently used by Kiss's competitor, Edgar Brandt. The Kiss atelier preferred the soft alabaster because they could turn it, shape it, cut it thick or thin, and color it themselves. Chandeliers were made in bronze and in wrought iron, and one particular dining room style, *Les Araignées,* consisted of a crown-shape divided into four sections. In the middle of each a large spider clung to its web.

If a gate required 150 leaves, they were all made by hand by one man who worked at that job until he had a complete pile. In some other prominent shops one leaf might be forged and the rest of the forms were drop stamped and then hand finished. Kiss was from the old school of blacksmithing and did not like short cuts but he did occasionally use the torch and the stamping machine. At the Kiss atelier they did no in-house casting but they spun iron and other metals on a spinning machine to make rounded shapes for vases. The fronts were either chased or decorated by repoussé.

In the 1920s many new Parisian buildings were designed with simple lines in the manner of Le Corbusier, yet wrought iron railings and balconies were the "paprika" that made the buildings stand out. Large exterior gates would be erected on site and then they were painted afterwards not only to prevent rust from rain and snow, but to prevent chipping due to the hammering and handling during the assembling process.

Fèher, never confined to the routine of a forging shop, enjoyed experimenting. Earrings were a favored design item, because he liked the way they became part of a woman's face. Kiss made them of wrought iron and then with the torch burnished them with gold and silver.

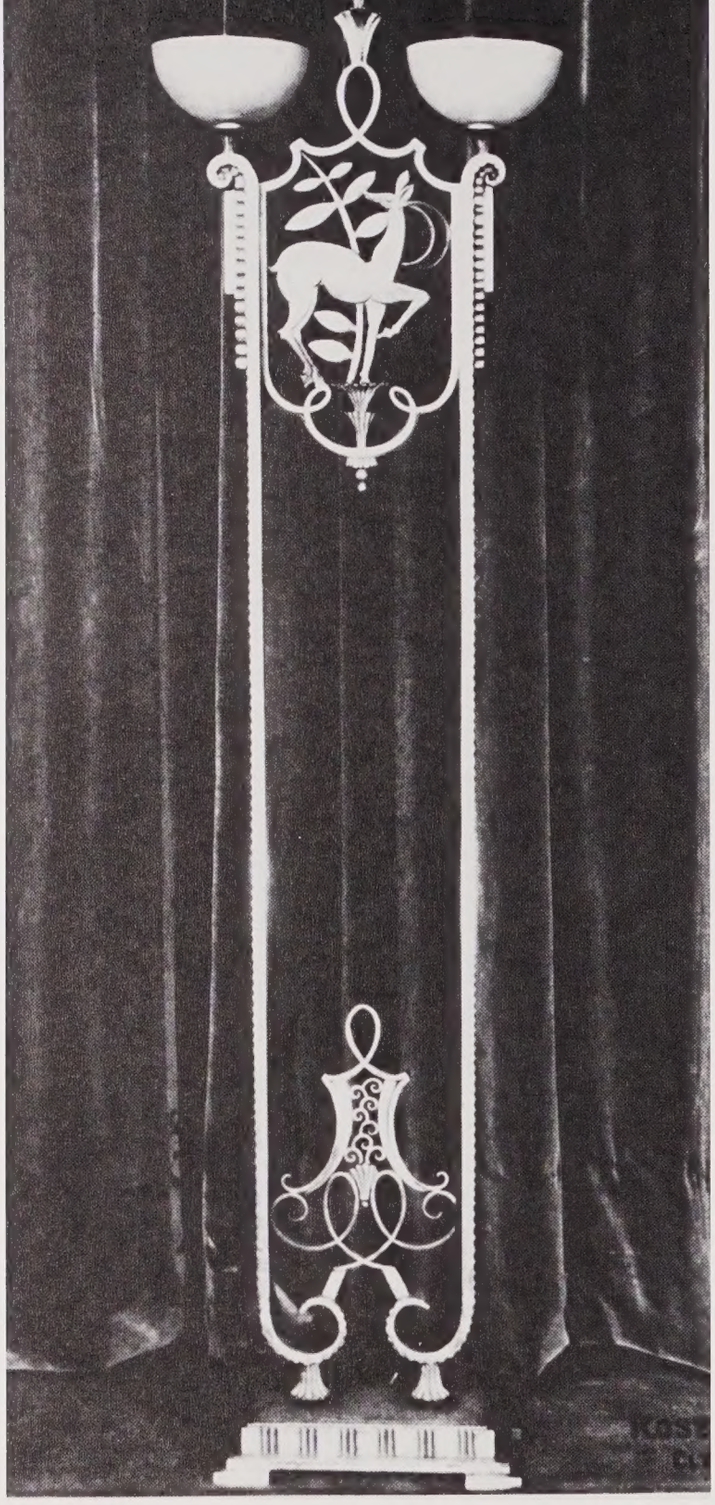
Kiss, twenty years older than Fèher, treated him like a partner - giving him an enormous salary and 2 percent of the gross.[1] He told him to make his own hours. Kiss would say,"Come in when you feel like designing," and he always encouraged Fèher to extend his vacations and get plenty of rest.

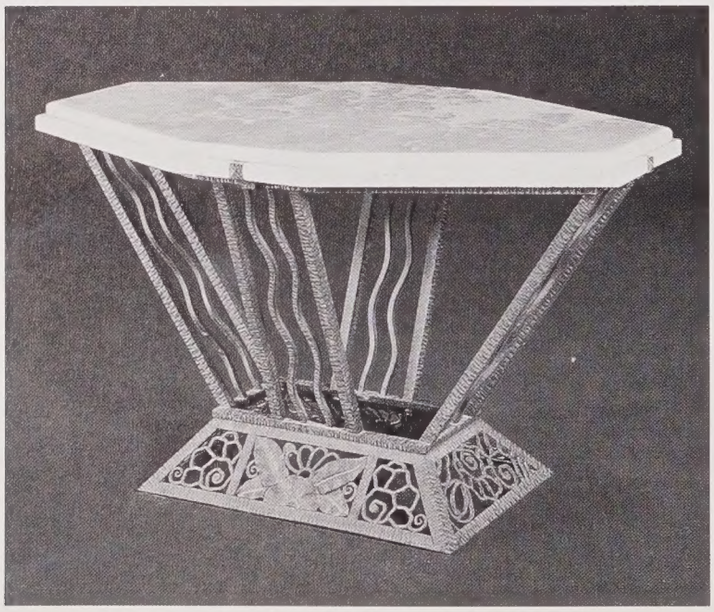
Commissions came primarily from architects who would usually be loyal to one *forgeron*; however, when they had a large job such as an apartment house, they would get prices from several smiths. One Parisian decorator, Edmond Souso, lived in Egypt and he got many commissions there for Kiss including the patronage of King Farouk. Fèher traveled to Egypt to oversee some of this work.

From 1924 on Fèher designed all of Kiss's four annual decorative arts salon showings including his work at the 1925 *Exposition*. The exhibitors did not pay a fee to set up displays at the fair; however, they had to give a percentage of their sales to

Note

[1] Fèher's salary was12,500ff per month or $500 per week plus 2% of gross. A Kiss table cost 10,000ff or $400 average in 1926-27. The spider lamp cost 3000ff or $120.





the exhibition committee in order to defray the expenses which were incurred by the French state. At the time, Kiss priced his goods at double their cost because of the amount of work that went into each piece. *La contribution,* or taxes, were paid on sales and salaries, the economy was stable, and there was tremendous importing and exporting from and to all parts of the world. Kiss ironwork was sold in a few American department stores.

Over the years a Hungarian-American, Martin Rose, the founder of Rose Iron Works in Cleveland, Ohio (1902), would travel to Paris to see the latest styles. He always visited the Kiss atelier and was impressed with the creativity of Paul Fèher. He told the young designer that if ever he wanted to come to America, he would have a job waiting. Fèher was totally satisfied until one day in 1929 when he overheard a conversation between Paul Kiss and a newspaper reporter. Kiss asked the reporter covering one of the seasonal salons not to mention Paul Fèher's name as the designer. Fèher, crestfallen, immediately resigned. He cabled Martin Rose in Cleveland to say that he would accept his job offer. And so ended, in one fateful moment, the successful collaboration of a great *forgeron* and a great designer.

American Art Moderne ironwork commenced with Paul Fèher's 1929 arrival in Cleveland. There the designer found a large shop and two Hungarian smiths who could produce whatever Fèher envisioned. At this time American ironsmiths were in the habit of forging historicist ironwork: Gothic, Renaissance, Early American, and the Louis styles. Paul Fèher brought the Art Moderne (Art Deco) mode to America where ironwork design was at least five years behind the French styles. One Fèher design, a wrought iron, aluminum, and brass grill displayed at the May 1930 show at the Cleveland Museum of Art, epitomizes the fine work he produced in the States and has since become an icon of American Art Deco metalwork. Other wonderful Fèher works for the Rose Ironworks company include a charming double light torchére with a gamboling deer and a superb console table and mirror highlighted by the geometric rhythm of curves and sharp angles. In a playful gate with a deer in the forest, Fèher cleverly reiterated the scrolled deer antlers with semi-circular tree branches and rainbows.

Martin Rose agreed to pay Fèher eighty dollars a week at a time when twenty-five dollars was considered a generous salary. However, although the designer had worked in Paris at the best economic period, he came to America at a very unfortunate time. The stock market crash on October 24th, 1929 wreaked havoc with the United States economy causing banks to fail. When Fèher went to the Union Trust bank to withdraw his savings, he received only $900.00 out of more than $7000.00 in deposits. Martin Rose and Fèher struggled through the depression by finding ways to cut costs by simplifying details, casting components, and using less costly metals.

In 1932, dejected about the economy, Fèher returned to Hungary, but he found Budapest offered him little chance to be creative. In spite of the depression Paul returned to America and began anew. For a while he worked for a Long Island contractor, painting scenic murals in the mansions of the Rockefellers and the Morgans who were little affected by the crash.

In 1934, his pockets empty but filled with a desire to work for himself, Paul headed for Hollywood. His first job was the design of a diploma for Carole Lombard's dog for which the movie star paid seven dollars. Soon his talent came to the attention of William Haines, a former cowboy movie actor who became a decorator for Hollywood personalities. "We need your talent" Haines told the designer, convincing him to do free-lance work. Paul's highly skilled

and detailed drawings helped Haines to sell jobs to clients such as the Walter Annenbergs by showing them what a completed room would look like. Paul designed everything from a bus station in Sacramento, to a gambling palace, to private homes. Fèher worked at Pickfair, the home of Mary Pickford and Douglas Fairbanks. Not only could he supply architectural renderings but he envisioned a *gesamkunstwerk* of furniture and accessories. He designed an art gallery to house the painting collection of Edward G. Robinson. In 1936 he got a job designing a house in Santa Barbara for a Mrs. Weber whose boss left her $50,000,000. With the $7000 fee (at a time when one could live for $3000 a year) Paul was able to go into business for himself and two years later he applied for American citizenship.

From 1955 through the 1970s Fèher became an expert in designing theme restaurants for Don Paul, a former linebacker for the L.A. Ram's football team. He created *The Ram's Horn* (in operation from 1955 to 1980) in Encino and *The Seven Kitchens* (1963) in the Topanga Plaza shopping center, the first food park to operate in an enclosed mall. The Topanga site had 7500 square feet which could seat 300 people. Fèher designed a Parisian street scene for the seating area and then created seven different facades for seven different cuisines such as Mexican, Italian, Chinese, and so on. He put them all in one flowing line so diners could buy a variety of foods and then join their families at a table and eat together. Today almost all of the major malls in the U. S. have at least one food park; Topanga was the original. Wherever possible Fèher included wrought iron and copperwork in these restaurants, never forgetting his love for the metal media. For instance, in another Don Paul eatery, the *Kitchenett* in La Habra, Fèher mixed copper and iron with great warmth. Iron and leather chairs were surrounded by huge iron street lights, a copper and iron kiosk (for condiment service), and a round banquette enclosed a hanging tree supported by a vertical iron grill. Glass globes and iron lanterns hung from the skylighted ceiling and mingled among the branches. Vertical copper hoods gleamed from the visible cooking area, and iron torchères divided the restaurants' space. Because they were so successful Fèher redid the same restaurants in San Bernadino. Don Paul said, "Once you worked with Paul Fèher, you could not work with anyone else. He was so talented; whatever he put on flimsy tissue paper, his craftsmen would follow it to the letter. It all came out perfectly because he knew exactly what he wanted and he could make it look like it had been there for a hundred years. The public found the ambiance very welcoming."

In the 1950s he also created the first Hawaiian restaurant, *Don, the Beachcomer,* on Hollywood Boulevard and Macadam. Fèher embellished the menu with drawings of the fancy Polynesian style drinks that were *de rigeur* to order there. Other Fèher restaurants included *The Tropics* (Vine Street and Hollywood Boulevard), *The Red Robin* (Reseda City), *Pucci's* (Studio City), and Ray Harlow's *Pump Room* (North Hollywood). *Paul Fèher Interior Designer* became a success because his formidable education gave him the tools to exercise a great talent. He continued working on a variety of projects through the 1970s until his failing eyesight forced his retirement. His warmth and humor helped him to live with macular degeneration and, indeed, it was difficult to keep up with him as he walked the streets of his Balboa Island, California "paradise." He greeted everyone with the same exuberance and joy that he had brought to his career for over fifty years.

Joan Kahr is an art historian specializing in metalwork. Her forthcoming book, Edgar Brandt and French Art Deco Ironwork, *will be published by Harry N. Abrams Inc. in 1999.*

Opposite page, top
Double light torchère (designed by Paul Fèher for the Rose Iron Work Inc. of Cleveland)
wrought iron, bronze
69 x 14 x 9"
Courtesy of the Rose Metal Industries.

Opposite page, bottom
Coffee table (designed by Paul Fèher, executed by Paul Kiss) c. 1926-27
wrought iron and marble
21 1/4 x 36 1/4 x 20 1/4"
Photo courtesy of Christie's.

Above
7 Kitchens
San Bernadino
1966
Photo courtesy of Don Paul.

Kate Wagle: Signs and Memory

text by Lois Allan

Above
Timepiece (detail of back), 1996
sterling, Lucite, paint
3 x 1 1/2 x 1/4"

Left
Timepiece, Memento Vita #2,
1995
sterling, Lucite, paint
3 x 2 1/4"

The most enduring of Kate Wagle's themes is the ephemerality of life and the ritualized efforts we make to postpone and, finally, to accept its inevitable end. The *ex voto* tradition, as representative of that compulsion, has been a subject of Wagle's research, and it provides a substructure for much of her work. "*Ex voto,*" she writes, "reflect culture, chronicling experience through a vocabulary similar to that of visual art and literature." Since ancient times these offerings to deities, in thanks for a favor granted, have taken the form of objects which are valuable either in themselves or in some way intimately connected with the devotee. Many were created specifically for individual worshipers' purposes. In Palermo, Sicily Wagle discovered that silversmiths created hand-worked *ex voto* using precious materials as far back as the eleventh century. More common throughout history, however, are home-crafted and mass produced objects. Anything can be *ex voto;* the most ordinary objects - even rose petals - are invested with new meanings and functions. Wagle draws on this transformation, not for its religious function, but as a manifestation of the power of popular culture and vernacular art forms in general.

Wagle also draws associations with images resulting from miraculous communications found on functional pieces of cloth, such as the shroud of Turin. Her interest in these phenomena developed while she was living in Las Cruces, New Mexico, in the 1980s. She came into contact with *Pano*, the handkerchief drawings of inmates in southwestern prisons. Usually rendered with ball-point pens on prison-issue handkerchiefs, images of bleeding hearts, bubbles, butterflies, and the like become vehicles for personal and spiritual yearning. Like *ex voto*, which in some cases they are, they epitomize an urge to materialize and personify spiritual yearning. In explaining her interest in these phenomena, Wagle said, "I'm fascinated with how one gets faith and with the relationship of art to objectifying it. As a traditionally trained metalsmith, I'm attracted to the idea that although objects from popular religion exploit many visual art conventions, they are in reality functional objects with practical applications." This link between art making and spirituality; the meshing of function, decoration, and sign; and the combination of precious and common materials are considerations that resonate in her materials and format.

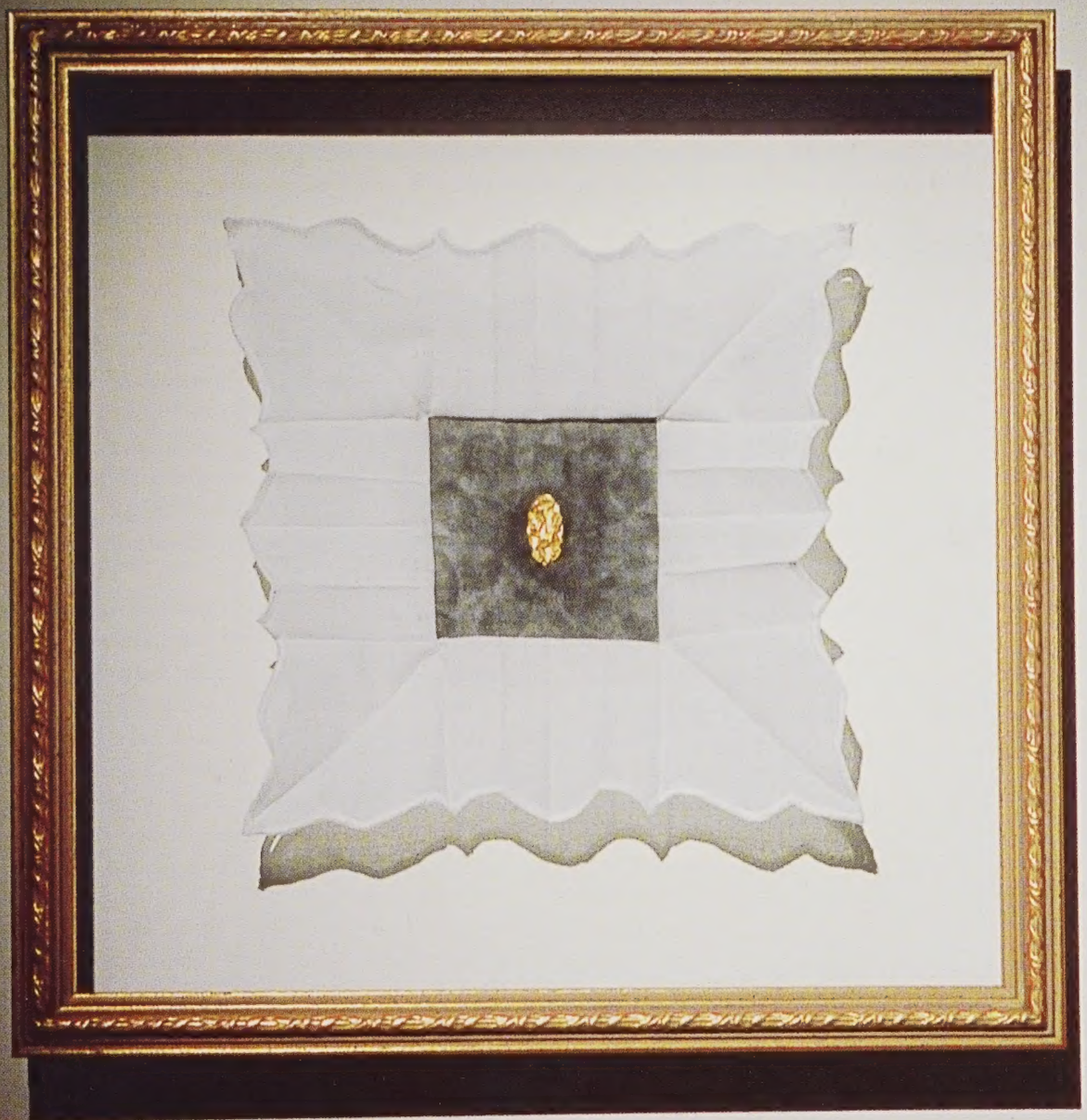
Left
Vanitas, Hand and Rings, 1994
sterling, graphite, handkerchief, 14k
18 x 18 x 1/8"

Above
Vanitas and Mementos
(installation detail), 1998

While these influences, as well as quotes from 1950s hobby-crafted plastic objects and Victorian mourning jewelry, are apparent, her work draws primarily on Wagle's own life experience. Her interest in miraculous textiles resurfaced during a period of mourning after the death of her mother. She has used the creases from folding and refolding the handkerchief to refer to the repetitive, compulsive activity of the grief-stricken. Though it may be pointless, it marks the connection between the hand and emotion. Roses cut into Lucite evolved from similar sources. In New Mexico her house sat next to a cemetery. After watching the plastic flowers on the graves fade over time, she observed, "They are intended to last, a poignant allusion to eternity via the permanence of plastic." In fact, their moment of beauty is merely less transitory than that of real flowers. That emotional pull between our awareness of passing time and its intimations of mortality pervades the work.

Above
Functional Wrist Object, 1997
sterling, 24k Lucite, paint
2 x 2 x 2"

Opposite page
(somewhat) Over Wrought
(installation detail), 1998



The tiny red roses of Wagle's *Functional Wrist Objects* are carved from the back of a Lucite block and filled with paint, after which the block is joined to metal elements that complete a "charm" for the bracelet. In contrast to the carved Lucite - a comparatively inexpensive and ordinary material used by hobbyists to fabricate gearshift knobs and paperweights in the 1950s - silver, embossed and cut into the silhouette of traditional gem shapes, is fabricated into secondary "charms." Each is topped by a stylized watch stem. Silver, like gold, has connotations of worth and it also references a long and culturally rich history of craft. (Like many metalsmiths, Wagle began her training with designing and producing sterling flatware and hollowware as well as adornment.) In the bracelets we are reminded of their relationship to function, to adornment, to lasting value, and in particular, to the materials' authority in traditions of faith.

The roses carved in Lucite are Wagle's latest use of the image for its loaded sensual, emotional, and cultural associations. Three sterling with vermeil brooches of 1988 show very graphic, flat, and representational renditions of a single rose. Six to eight inches high, they are, in essence, drawings in metal. The openness of the images refers to transparency, transience, artificiality, and ephemeral values. Two versions of a rose from 1989, *Northern Garden #1 and #2*, evolved into a closed, simplified image. The illusion of volume is created by the adroit placement of curving triangular shapes and manipulations of patina.

Before the single rose, Wagle's jewelry typically consisted of multiple corsages and bouquets. A series of brooches exemplify her preoccupation at that time with a more open structure and also with patterning, texture, and color in surface treatment. Having been caught up with automobile surfaces and interiors in graduate school (in her words, "I had a brief infatuation with flip-flop pearlescent auto lacquers and tucked and rolled silk"), she investigated surface treatments, doing research in photo-etching and fusion, and applying it to pieces like *Party Trick* and *Corsage*, both from 1984. In *Just a Mirage*, 1987, she distilled her vocabulary by tightening her compositions and focusing on graphic representation. A later piece, *Equinox*, 1989, returns to an emphasis on surface. Completely covered with red and green abstract organic shapes that suggested plant growth, its patinated finish and rolled-flat form sum up Wagle's early interest in fabric-like pattern.

While dwelling on hopes for her yet unborn child during her 1989 pregnancy, Kate Wagle became absorbed with the idea of perfection. Why do we so desire it, struggle to achieve it, knowing how elusive and transient it is? Relating it to craft, morality, relationships, and to beauty, it became, in her words, "a litany of desire." At the same time, she was becoming hyper-aware of transience and mortality. A germinal series, *Images of Perfection*, was produced in 1990-1991. *Images of Perfection, Rose and Diver* were elements in an installation, which, with one exception, consisted of die-formed, sterling silver pieces of a single image on a sheet of silver. The exception, the first in the series, represented unadorned perfection: a completely blank, three-inch square sheet of 24k presented on a black background in a gold frame. Its flat materiality set up a context for the subsequent stamped elements, which included a rose, a diamond, a pod, an acorn, and a diving figure. As Frank Lewis wrote, ". . . [the series] created an odd, yet intriguing visual poem. . . .It represents the richness of image, substance, and imagination" (*Metalsmith* [Summer 1991]:45).

The rose form, in addition to its formal attributes and layered associations, became a symbol of perfection. More than most images it incorporates a variety of visual possibilities as well as rich contextual associations. In addition to being instantly recognizable, it is weighted with a potential for triteness and sentimentality. For all of these reasons it has become a distillation of Wagle's engagement with beauty, process, and thematic signs.

Wagle also explored new working methods. Die-forming and embossing were of particular interest to her for their ability to produce texture and images which emerge from sheet metal. The series, *Topiary Objects*, exemplifies her use of overall embossed patterns, with a myriad of tiny leaves: textured, clearly silhouetted object-signs.

The topiaries, all die-formed, patterned, and embossed silver brooches, segued into other objects - watches, pendants, and bracelets - in the mid 1990s. Like the roses, their forms and textures relate to time and temporality. The timepiece refers to the organization of time; the topiary to halting the effects of time. The pendants refer both to timepieces and Latin-American *relicarios*, which are lockets containing miniature religious folk paintings or sculptures. The *relicarios* are adornment intended as spiritual communication, similar

Opposite page
Images of Perfection, Rose, 1990
sterling
6 x 4 x 1/4"

Above
Memento #5 (pendant), 1996
sterling, Lucite, paint
3 x 3/4 x 3/4"

to the *ex voto*. With regard to her use of references to vernacular religious practices, Wagle says, "While my subject matter is purely secular and personal, I'm generally interested in the idea of miracles, particularly of the small, mundane variety."

Several recent series, namely *Vanitas, Memento Vita*, and *On My Mother's Shoulders*, in their titles as well as their forms, continue to allude to mortality. At the same time, one perceives in them an evolution of the image vocabulary that is the hallmark of Wagle's art. Her treatment of a material from the popular culture, such as Lucite, with the same attention to process that attends gold and silver speaks to her commitment to concept as well as craft. The pendants, *Memento #2, #3, and #4*, exemplify an ideal coherence of materials and craftsmanship that subverts the notion of preciousness in jewelry as the primary measure of its worth.

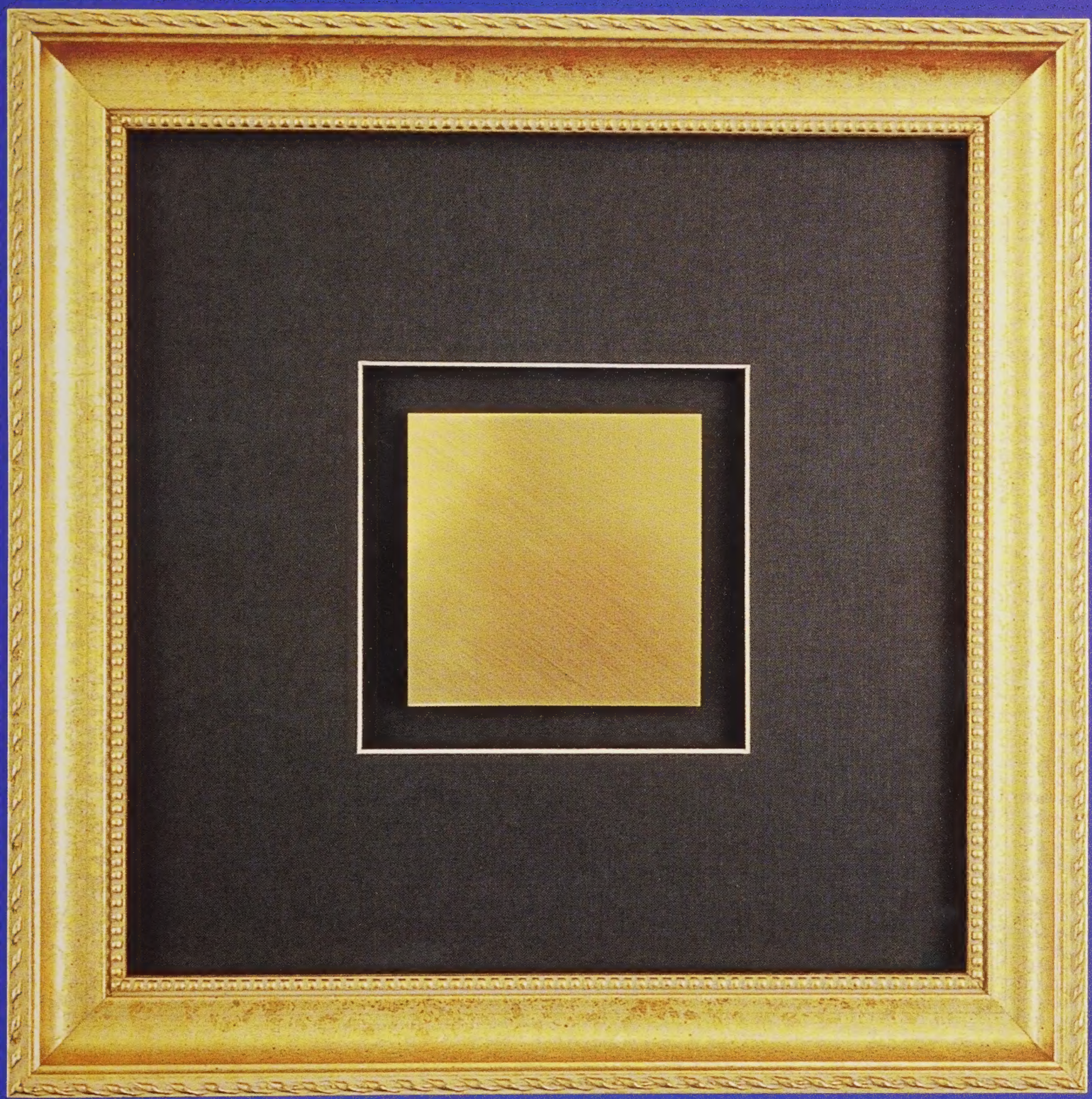
The *Vanitas* series marks the beginning of the handkerchief pieces. The whiteness of the men's handkerchiefs become backgrounds for graphite drawings; ordinary materials, cotton and graphite, are overlaid with patterns of embossed silver imagery. The concept and titles of the *Vanitas* pieces are inspired by genre paintings. They also allude to mourning, miraculous manifestations of images on textiles, and *ex votos* as a material investment in the spiritual.

With her recent installation at the BonaKeane Gallery in Portland, Oregon, Kate Wagle enlarged upon a theme that has occupied her for almost a decade. *(somewhat) Over-Wrought* was an elegant presentation of jewelry as conceptual signifiers. Consisting of seven sets of three elements each, it suggested, in its overall appearance, secularized stations of the cross. Close inspection revealed ambiguous but intriguing groupings of ceremonial, jewelry-related objects with handkerchiefs. There were seven open, black ring boxes, lighted from within and containing individual, huge sparkling gems that were, in reality, empty cages of fine glass rod. These boxed rings, titled *Fragile Engagements*, were placed along a narrow translucent shelf. Seven bracelets hung from pegs mounted on the wall directly above the boxes. Each bracelet *(Functional Wrist Objects)* consisted of a silver cord long enough to wrap around a wrist several times, a prominent "watch fob" clasp and two "charms" - one a rose carved into Lucite, the other a darkened silver, leaf-textured silhouette in the form of a faceted jewel. The juxtaposition between the elaborately starched and folded white cotton handkerchiefs (*Tangible Evidence*), with their smudged, powdered graphite fields and 24k gold centers, and the bracelets created a tension reverberating among the cotton handkerchiefs as mundane artifacts, the preciousness of the materials, and the implicit significations of jewelry.

With *(somewhat) Over-Wrought*, Wagle further conceptualized the relationship of materials, images, and process in creating objects of profound personal meaning. In response to a question of why she chooses to work in such an intimate scale, she replied that since her work refers to the body and to subjects that are very close to one's deep fears, yearnings, and desires, it requires engagement on an intimate level. Before the work of artists like Miriam Shapiro and Audrey Flack, imagery relating to feminine experience was devalued by mainstream male critics. When Shapiro incorporated lace and quilt designs into her paintings of the 1970s, she elevated women's work by recognizing its beauty, function, and creative expertise. She worked with the team that produced *Womanhouse*, 1972, in Los Angeles: an installation filling every room of an old house with work relating to women's domestic, maternal, personal, and sexual experience. Flack, a photo-realist painter, composed still-lives of perfume bottles, lipsticks, jewelry, and other paraphernalia found on women's vanity tables. Though her paintings were recognized initially for the formal qualities so characteristic of photo-realism, their denotations of the body and adornment were influential in the current widespread use of thematic material relating to the female body. Like many other women artists of her generation, Wagle begins with her personal, inner experience, but reaches beyond it to reflect deep-seated emotions that are universal.

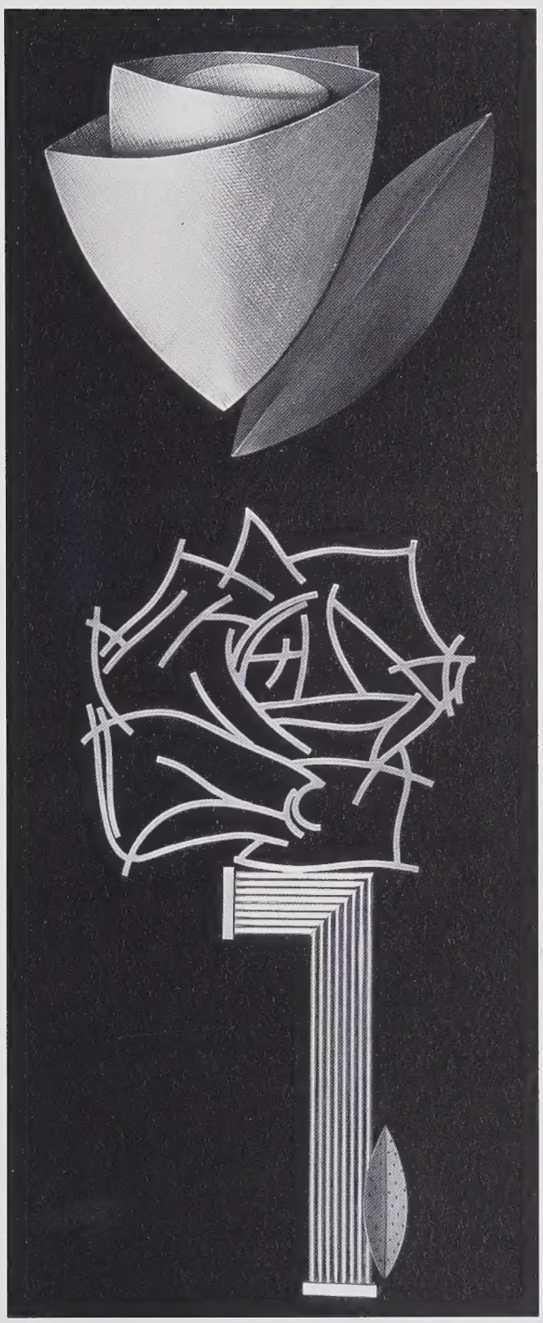
Kate Wagle identifies herself with a "second generation" of contemporary American metalsmiths. The first included World War II veterans who had traveled widely, shed their provincialism, and, with the financial aid of the G.I. Bill, revitalized both appreciation and production of crafts in this country. They were trained in and initiated programs at institutions of higher learning, often taught by European masters prompted to emigrate by war and political unrest, and then they became teachers themselves. Her own interest in metal craft began at the University of California at Berkeley in 1971 when she took an undergraduate course in design history which included metals. Later, in 1975, she

Images of Perfection, Gold, 1991
24k, matted and framed
13 x 13 x 2"



earned her undergraduate degree at Portland State University in Oregon, where her metals coursework was a very thorough curriculum under the leadership of Robert Morton. Her study of history, its ideas as well as its aesthetics, continues to play an influential role in her work. Her interest in the style and drama of Baroque art can be seen in the corsage and bouquet pieces. While she obviously draws on contemporary and outsider art, a more direct connection is evident in her adaptation of the *ex voto* tradition.

The foundation for her increasingly complex artwork, however, was laid at Arizona State University where, in 1981, she earned her M.F.A. in metalsmithing, working with David Pimentel. Wagle takes pride in the rigorous training in techniques that she acquired there, because, in her words, "My craft supports the art. I love the craft part of it - making things well and beautifully." Like many classically trained metalsmiths, she creates meticulously crafted objects that come from a tradition of utility, decoration, and preciousness; like many of her contemporary colleagues, she expands that tradition to include mundane materials and to combine processes and techniques which mix symbols and images.



Making things well and beautifully also guides her approach to her life and teaching. She has held teaching positions at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, New Mexico State University, Montana State University, Oregon College of Art and Crafts, and Portland State University in addition to her current post as Professor of Art (Metal) at the University of Oregon. That career and her studio work are counterbalanced by a rewarding personal life as a wife and mother. Indeed, she sees the feminine themes and forms that run through her work as reflections of her life as a woman in a particular time and culture.

From a less personal point of view, however, the fact that Kate Wagle's work initiates an intellectual analysis as well as the visceral response expected of jewelry, places her among the vanguard of metalsmiths who equally emphasize concept, beauty, sensual appeal, and skillful execution as they create work that redefines jewelry as a significant form of art.

Lois Allen is a writer who resides in Beaverton, Oregon.

All photographs by Richard Gehrke

Opposite page
Topiary Object, Hand (brooch), 1992
sterling
3 x 3 x 1/8"

Above, top
Northern Garden #1 (brooch), 1989
sterling
4 x 4 1/2"

Right
Shelf (on the) (brooch), 1988
sterling, 24k vermeil
6 x 3 1/8"

David Monette and Tami Dean: Harmonic Collaboration

text by Gary Dawson

We must all balance the knowledge of metal and how it can be worked with aesthetics. When function is of primary concern, the door opens for a third consideration.

For David Monette and Tami Dean, that third consideration is acoustic resonance. David Monette is a metal worker, musician, business man, and magician. He hand builds brass instruments of the highest order for some of the most well known musicians of our era. His collaboration with goldsmith Tami Dean on a decorated trumpet for Wynton Marsalis produced a new landmark in the realm of brass musical instruments. Having recently finished a presentation *Flumpet* for Art Farmer, the team of Monette and Dean are breaking design barriers while continuing to produce objects of ultimate usefulness. This team makes instruments that players like Wynton Marsalis want to "live up to playing."

David Monette was a speaker at the 1994 SNAG conference and he gave what goldsmith and author Tim McCreight called, "One of the most memorable presentations I have ever seen at a SNAG conference." To begin to understand David's approach to his metalwork one must attempt to grasp his basic philosophy of life.

"Life is breath, and breath is resonance," David says without hesitation. "In breathing, we create our resonance with the universal force that keeps us alive and in tune with our own truth." Monette's goal "is to invent mouthpieces and instruments that encourage a more intimate connection between the performer and his or her audience. We do this by making mouthpieces and instruments that are more resonant, and that allow improved body use (less tension) during performance." He strives to create the most perfect vehicle possible with which a talented musician could translate his or her own breath (or resonance with the universe) into an audible signal that another sentient being may, for a time, share. Not an unworthy goal, though perhaps more than a bit difficult.

David explains, "Improving one's physical approach during performance can be learned through many disciplines, including Yoga, Alexander Technique, martial arts, and others." Alexander Technique (which he has studied) was invented by a performer for use in enhancing communication abilities. The study and practice of corrected body use is also fundamental to the Kundalini Yoga that David has practiced and taught for many years. "The Alexander Technique is the study and practice of letting the skeletal structure of the body support the body weight during various activities, rather than the musculature. This allows for more efficiency and ease of motion, and therefore a more open physical, energetic, and emotional connection to oneself and others. The results are both obvious (improved projection and clarity of sound) and subtle (more connection and emotional impact to the audience)."

Almost half of David's time is occupied by traveling. He gives clinics and master classes on instrument design, sound concept, and body use during performance. In an upcoming trip to Japan and Hong Kong, he will meet the Principal Trumpet of the Israel Philharmonic, who will assist him in demonstrating his concepts.

"Our biggest challenge," David says, " is not in building innovative equipment, but is in helping players free up their body use and obsolete muscle memory so that they can take advantage of the innovations." Apparently, wind instruments are young enough on the evolutionary scale that they require quite a bit of physical compensation by the player in order to be played in tune. The resulting tension that players hold in their bodies helps them to play conventional mouthpieces and instruments, but negates most of the improvements in the Monette instruments. The key piece of hardware that allows this more relaxed approach is the Monette mouthpiece.

Above
Decorated Flumpet, made for Art Farmer
Photograph by Joseph Deiss

"To be more specific," Monette goes on, "the unique and radical features our mouthpieces allow are: instruments that weigh up to four times the weight of other instruments; mouthpieces that are integral (built-in) to the instrument; instruments with two bells, connected with sound posts."

"Tension kills resonance," David says, "and the release, or management, of tension through correct and efficient body use significantly improves the pitch center (resonance) of the body during performance. Less tension during performance helps the player produce a wider range of sounds (overtones) and the sound one produces has more projection and duration." This assertion seems to have been validated by a study done by Frank E. Hanson at Ohio State University in 1988: *Trumpet Timbre: A Comparative Investigation of the Tone Quality of Two Professional C Trumpets.* Mr. Hanson's study was done "to identify and describe similarities and differences in the tone quality of two professional quality C Trumpets, a Bach and a Monette."

The study concludes in part, that, "Comparisons of spectral analyses revealed differences in the spectral composition of tones from the Bach and Monette trumpets. Differences tended to be consistent, and pertain primarily to the relative strengths and distributions of spectral energy. The Monette trumpet generally produced more harmonics, was higher in high frequency energy, and produced a more consistent spectrum than the Bach trumpet. The amplitude of spectral components of Monette trumpet tones tended to be greater than for the same tones on the Bach trumpet." (Hanson)

Subjective analysis was also used in the study done by Mr. Hanson and predictably "the terms used to describe the timbre of the Monette trumpet included 'thick,' and 'homogeneous,' and 'resonant' to greater degrees than for the Bach trumpet. There was an agreement from each performer that at very loud dynamics the Bach trumpet sound tended to 'break up' or become 'edgy' in quality with a diminishing ability to project or 'carry.' All three players said that it is possible to play louder with a satisfactory tone quality on the Monette trumpet."(Hanson) It would appear then, that David has indeed gone a fair distance toward his goal of enhanced projection and resonance for performance horns.

David's concept of resonance has not only driven him to create some dynamic instruments, it has taken him to the putting green as well. Resonance is a vibrational response to stimulus that David seems to not let lie. The newest innovation from the Monette studio is a putter that in my own somewhat limited, though not totally inept, experience actually "feels" better than any putter with which I have played.

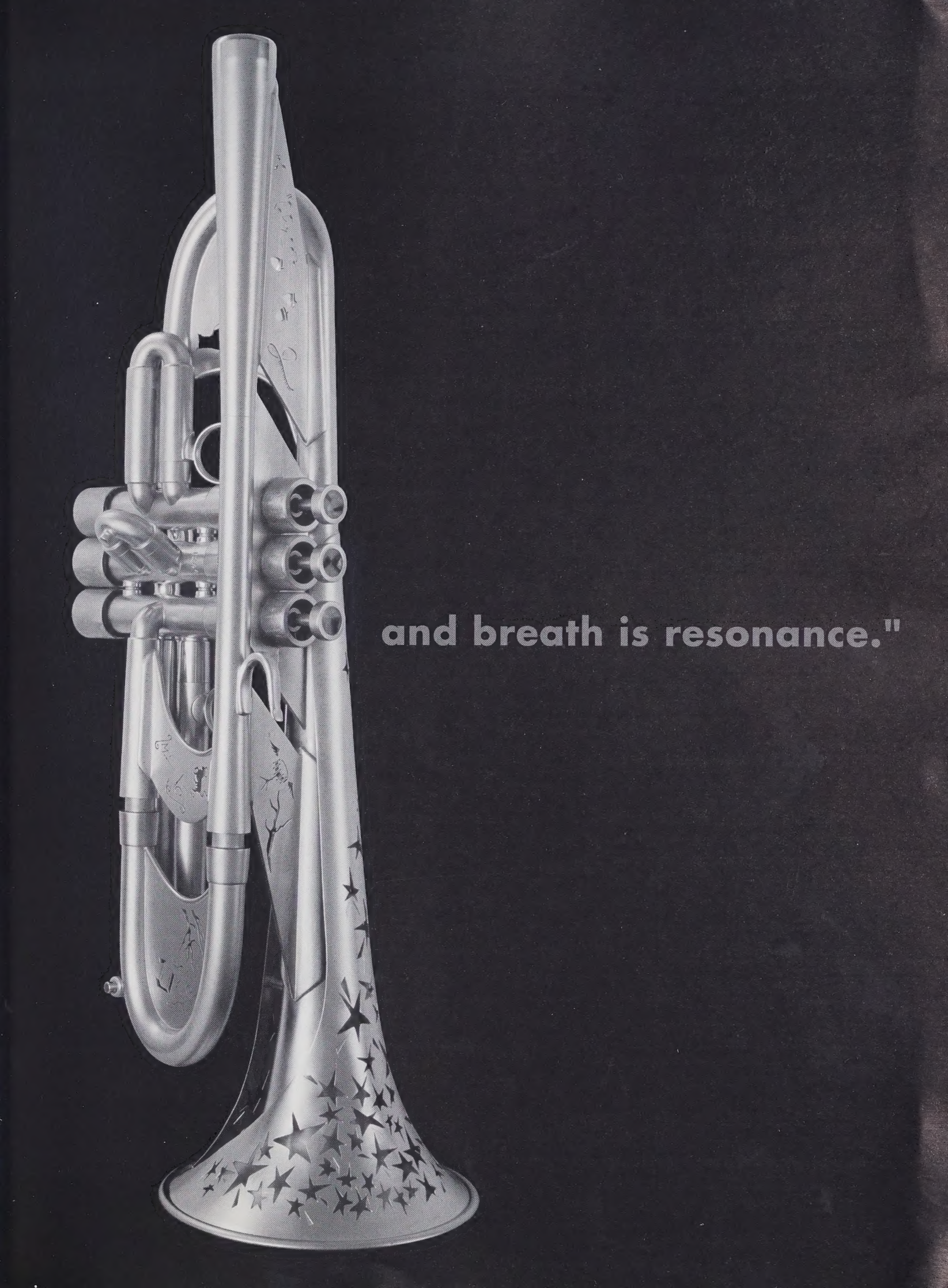
It is interesting that the same differences in the harmonic structure of sound produced by players using Monette instruments also exists in the modes of vibration found in the Monette golf club. That is to say, the low frequencies are lower, the highs are higher, and the inharmonics and non-resonant highs are dramatically reduced. This was documented in the instruments early on by Frank Hanson's paper, and also in the golf club by a team of kinematics experts at Sandia National Laboratory. The work at Sandia was from a grant David received to document the invention several years ago. His patent on the golf club invention is based on the same principles as the two-belled, integral mouthpiece *Samadhi* instruments he makes. He received the notice of allowance on the patent several months ago, and he should have the patent in hand before this article is printed.

Monette met Tami Dean at the American Craft Exposition in Evanston, Illinois in 1990 where Dean was showing her metalwork. Dean had already earned a reputation in the art jewelry craft circuit as a respected artist as well as a meticulous craftsperson. Dean and Monette were creatively attracted to each other and formed an ongoing relationship resulting in their current cooperative effort on decorated horns. Dean's first involvement with horn decoration was in 1991, shortly after the two met. From the beginning it was a mutual interest in music and metal work that kept them in touch.

Many metal artists talk of entering into some type of collaborative effort but few actually make the plunge. Those who eventually do are frequently frustrated by independent thinking – both their own and that of their partners. Queried on this topic, both Dean's and Monette's responses were fascinating and informative. Tami Dean says: "I've always been happiest working alone in my studio. Collaborating with Dave is an

"Life is breath,

Opposite page
Decorated Flumpet,
made for Art Farmer
Photograph by Joseph Deiss

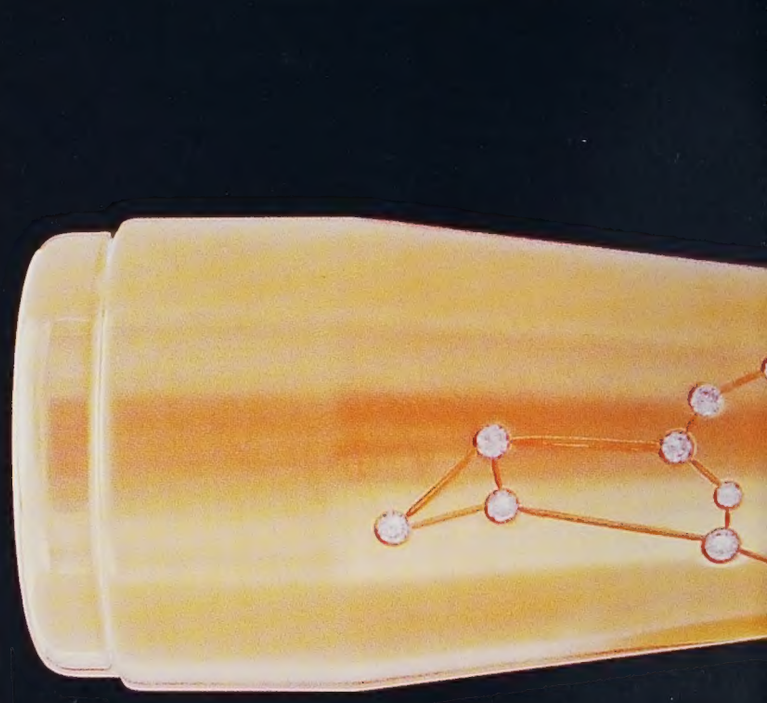

and breath is resonance."

adventurous departure from my regular jewelry work. Although our perceptions and explanations of the world around us may be vastly different, what we share is our approach to our work. I think both Dave and I put heavy demands on ourselves to produce work that will stand up to sharp scrutiny in its execution. Then, working together, we knock ourselves out living up to each other's standards. The scary part is that, while I get to stretch out conceptually, developing images to illustrate a player's life and loves, I have to be constantly aware that I'm progressively reducing the horn's playability as I saw-pierce those images. Dave has the final word about how far I can go. Then, he works some awesome magic, adjusting the instrument until it finally plays perfectly."

Tami asserts that she doesn't share David's sense about acoustic resonance and thus, cannot predict where and how much she'll be able to cut (pierce) in her decorative process. Because of that, the pair are in very close contact during design and layout of the imagery. She sums up the experience by stating, "The entire process is totally consuming for me. Ultimately, it's totally satisfying. I have told Dave often that helping with these amazing instruments is the most exciting thing I've ever done in metal."

David describes the cooperative effort: "To make highly personalized, outrageously decorated instruments that are also the best playing and sounding instruments I produce is a huge challenge. Tami is a genius at distilling the essence of a player's life into a set of icons for these instruments. Our communication is what allows her icons to enhance the overall performance of the instrument rather than detract from it. . . .(Not too many instruments are designed to have a bunch of holes sawed into them!) The idea Tami and I both share is for the decorated instruments to celebrate not only the music but also the life of the performer."

A survey of the cooperative work to date affirms the value of their combined efforts. According to David, "Tami spends roughly forty to fifty hours researching a player's background in order to develop symbols and icons that tell the client's life story. I'm in on some, but not all, of this process. The process includes interviewing the client, along with their family members and colleagues. Pages of notes are taken to review and distill later on. We also review personal letters . . . and the clients



Opposite page
Detail of decorated Flumpet,
made for Art Farmer
Photograph by Joseph Deiss

seem to love to send us sheet after sheet. We, mostly Tami, research symbolism from various cultures that reflect the player's heritage and/or interests to come up with ideas. Probably eight to ten hours are spent with me directly involved, reviewing ideas, making placement decisions and making final adjustments to the icons. At this point, we determine which stones or gems, if any, best compliment the imagery and budget."

Beyond research time, Dean may log from 150 to 200 additional solo hours designing and actually doing the decorative work on any given instrument. Decoration may include such techniques as saw piercing, gem placement, and inlay.

"Once the images have been finalized," David says, "the braces themselves must visually support that imagery. Their forms provide a context, tying the symbols together and reflecting the themes of the player's personal history. The result might be an intentionally pierced curvy crack to suggest a river, symbolizing Art Farmer's boyhood in the Grand Canyon State, or a pre-Columbian architectural motif used in the geometry of the braces as is the case with our latest instrument for Dr. Sheldon Hendler." David then echoes Tami's mention of acoustic attention, "This is all decided in the context of musical considerations: How will the shape, size and placement of these decorated braces affect the musical performance of the instrument? This is of course my call, and Tami goes out of her way to be accommodating. If the horn doesn't play, all the decorations in the world don't mean a thing."

David operates out of a 5,000-square-foot studio/workshop in Portland, Oregon, where he moved from the Chicago area in 1992. The space is about 25 percent office, 15 percent play/test area and 60 percent production area. His shop is situated near the airport and, on sunny days, David might avail himself of that proximity to do a bit of sport flying (he is also a private pilot) around the scenic Portland area.

Walking into the front entry of his shop on a workday, one is immediately aware that several things are going on at once: a horn player trying out a new mouthpiece, a prospective client on the phone, coordination of engraving and plating services, tuning up a finished horn, and, always, horns being hand-built in the workshop. David says: "When I started out, I did all the work myself out of a one-man basement shop in Bloomington Indiana. I do not build instruments entirely by myself any more, as my coworkers are better at most individual tasks involved in building an instrument now... which is great! The last instrument I built by myself was probably the prototype *FLUMPET* back in 1990."

Besides himself, David's staff consists of seven employees, most of whom have been with him since before his move from Chicago. "All Monette employees have been trained on the job here," David says, "and none had built instruments before." Interestingly, almost every employee was first a client. "We find it better to train someone who understands our musical concepts from scratch than to hire someone with experience," David says, "because of the specialized nature of our work." The industry standard for trumpet manufacturing is five to eight personhours per instrument. On the most popular Monette instruments (not the most labor intensive) two days are spent fabricating just six braces. Instruments average 150 personhours, with the decorated instruments up around 500-600 hours. "Because our instruments are so labor intensive," David says, "techniques used by other instrument manufacturers are a roadblock. The employee *would have* to *un-learn* the conventional techniques to learn ours. It usually takes an employee between six-months and a year to be productive. If they don't have it after a year, they probably never will."

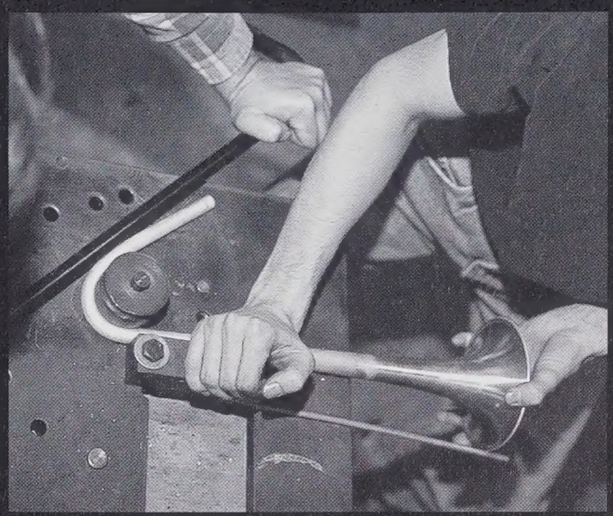
The construction of a Monette instrument is accomplished in the following manner. When a new customer shows interest in a Monette instrument, he or she fill out a customer profile questionnaire. The completed questionnaire is then reviewed by Dave and the production supervisor. This reveals the client's playing habits, equipment history, teachers, musical preferences, favorite performers, and performance pitch (which varies around the world and even in different cities). If he or she is not already using Monette mouthpieces, the client then tries playing his or her own instrument with a Monette mouthpiece. If he or she relates to the mouthpieces and still wants a Monette instrument, an order is initiated, assuming, based on profile, that he or she will be able to open up his or her body use and playing approach enough to be able to continue to evolve with it.

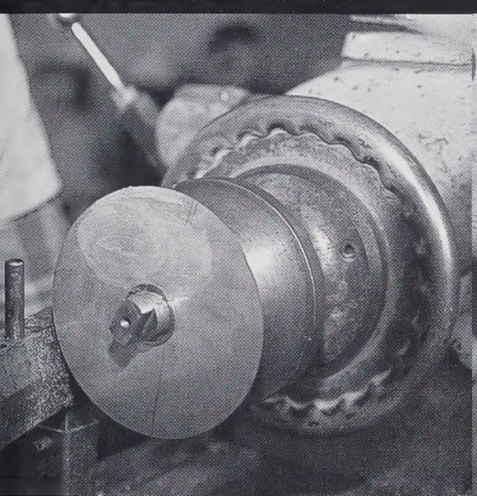
Opposite page, top
Bending the tubing

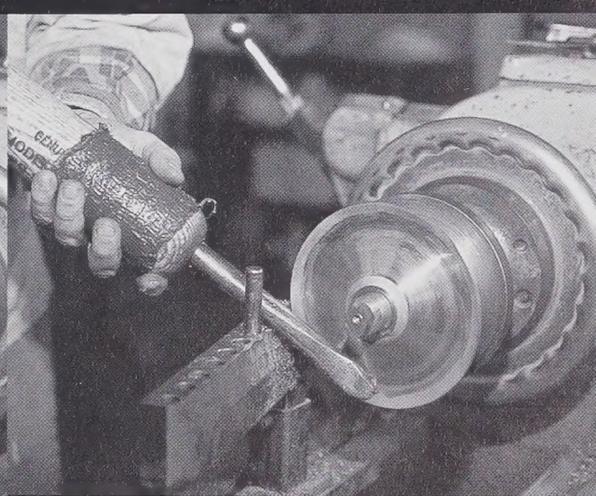
Middle, Left to Right
Turning the bell on spiculum

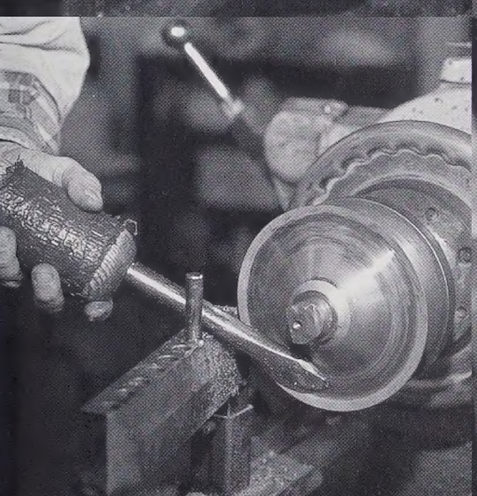
Bottom
Tami Dean adjusting brace to fit curve of tubing

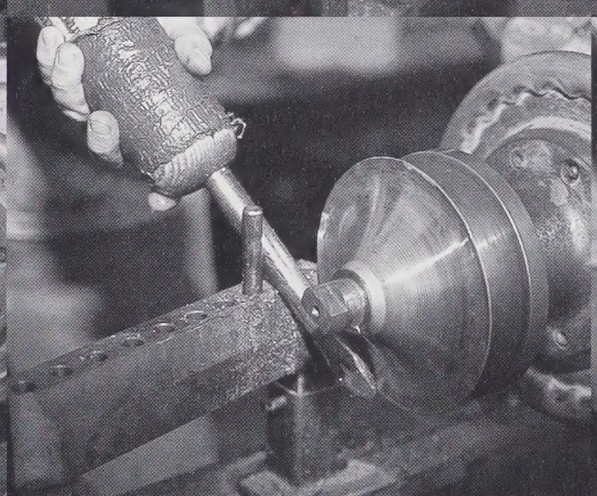
Photographs by Gary Dawson

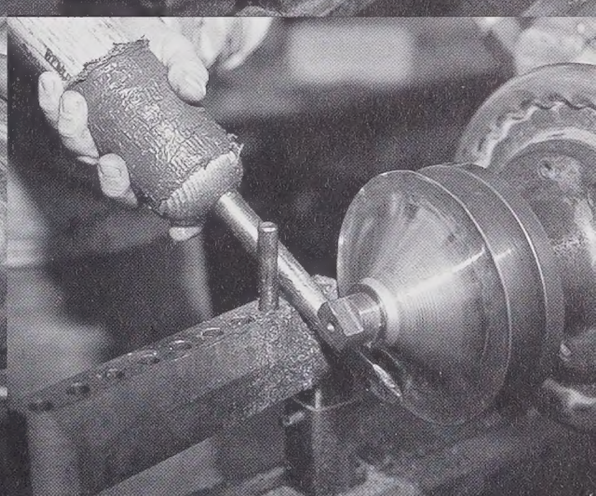












The specifications for each instrument are determined in a shop meeting, with the client's questionnaire in hand. (The questionnaire is kept on file and referenced during future repairs or on future orders by the same client.) Players will sometimes also send recordings of themselves, especially if they cannot visit the shop in person. Monette will only discuss musical preferences with clients. The player has no input on physical dimensions of his or her instrument, other than finger ring size. "Players do not understand the musical consequences of changing various design details of our instruments," David asserts, "so on that level the client input is limited."

Some clients may visit the shop in person before delivery, but many have waited a long time to order and have known for years they would eventually get a Monette instrument. They may not visit at the time the instrument is ordered. It is preferred to have them visit in person if they are not familiar with Monette mouthpieces, so they can get a body use lesson in preparation for receiving their instruments. Again, body use and mouthpiece acclimation are most important. The model and weight of an instrument built for a given player depends on his or her musical requirements, body use, and how he or she has developed their sound concept. It is also dependent, to a lesser degree, on their mouthpiece size. The most advanced clients usually use the heaviest instruments, as these horns offer the most projection of sound and are the easiest to play when using a relaxed and open physical approach to playing. They also sound the best when used in a room made for communication. Decorated instruments are always very heavy, and the decorated trumpets (as opposed to decorated *Flumpets*) have integral mouthpieces. With the integral mouthpiece, there is only one thing - the instrument - between the player and the audience. The instrument, and therefore the communication between the player and the audience, is improved tremendously this way.

The waiting list is, on average, about six months. Communication is important to make sure the customer acclimates to Monette mouthpieces while waiting for delivery. Many players will change mouthpiece sizes when switching to a Monette instrument, and they are helped through this transition.

Next the instrument is scheduled for production. Rough leadpipes and slides crooks are fabricated in advance, as are slide tubes, which are cut to size and length in batches. Valve clusters are also made in advance. These are made from turned and drilled brass tubes. Three tubes are silver soldered together with the appropriate connecting ports and knuckles installed to form the raw valve assembly. The drilling of the ports is indexed to insure that the port alignment on the finished instrument will be correct between casing and pistons.

Pistons, made in advance in large batches, are made from monel tubing in which brass ports are silver soldered. Brass spring cages are fit, aligned and soft soldered to the top of the pistons. When the client's turn comes up, the serial number is assigned, the bell is made, and the valve casing mounting is started, all at about the same time, about two months before delivery.

The valve casing is stamped with the serial number, and the tubes that carry air are balled out with tungsten carbide balls of the appropriate size for the individual player and the model of instrument being built. Hand engraving of the valve casing, if desired, is done at this time. Ballisters are soft soldered on and the slide tubes are countersunk individually on the lathe to fit each individual knuckle. Slide tubes are mounted on the valve casing and checked for alignment to the valve assembly. Crooks are adjusted for correct radius, with alignment plus or minus .0005" for parallel. Brass inside slide tubes are all centerless ground before assembly to be perfectly round for a snug fit. Slide tubes are then prelapped to get them closer to a final fit. Final lapping is done later, after the instrument is gold plated.

Bells are made in two pieces. The gauge of the brass is between twenty-two and six-

Right
Detail of decorated Flumpet, made for Art Farmer
Photograph by Joseph Deiss

Opposite page
David Monette and Tami Dean presenting decorated *Flumpet* to Art Farmer

teen, depending on the instrument. The stem blank is waterjet cut to exact size, wrapped into a cone shape (spiculum) on a mandrel, and butt-seamed with a mix of brass powder and flux. This paste is laid out along the seam, and most of the seam is brazed in one pass. The final four inches must be done separately, since the material distorts some on the large end as the pass is finished. The flare is then spun from a brass disc, and the end of the resulting flare is trimmed on the engine lathe to the exact size to fit the drawn and machined bell stem. The parts are lapp seamed and brazed the same way as the long seam. After clean-up, the last ten inches of the bell is spun on the mandrel in one pass, turning the bell bead back on the edge of the flair to finish.

The leadpipe is trimmed to length, the morse taper is put in, and the mouthpiece receiver, the receiver, and end of leadpipe are all machined for an exact fit. The tapered mouthpiece shank fits into the receiver to plus or minus .0002" O.D. for exact mouthpiece shanking. This is regulated with a depth gauge, and is critical for the optimum performance of the instrument. The large end of the leadpipe is machined down to accept the tuning slide outside tube.

The tuning slide crook is trimmed and the tuning slide tubes and braces are fabricated and soldered together with alignment plus or minus .001" to parallel. The large end of the leadpipe is hand lapped with 800-grit lapping compound to prepare the assembly for mounting on the instrument. The center leadpipe/ballister brace is fabricated with two flanges with correct radius and milled center post. The brace is then silver soldered together and leadpipe/tuning slide assembly is soldered onto the valve casing.

The bell bead is filled with solder, and the bell is trimmed to correct length for the instrument. The bell shank is checked for exact size and balled out again. The bell ferrule is turned down on the lathe to fit the valve casing knuckle and bell stem. The bell ferrule is then dry mounted, aligned, and soldered onto the casing. The bell-to-ballister brace is made in the same fashion as the above leadpipe-to-ballister brace, and shaped to fit the taper of the bell. The bell is then soldered on to the valve casing.

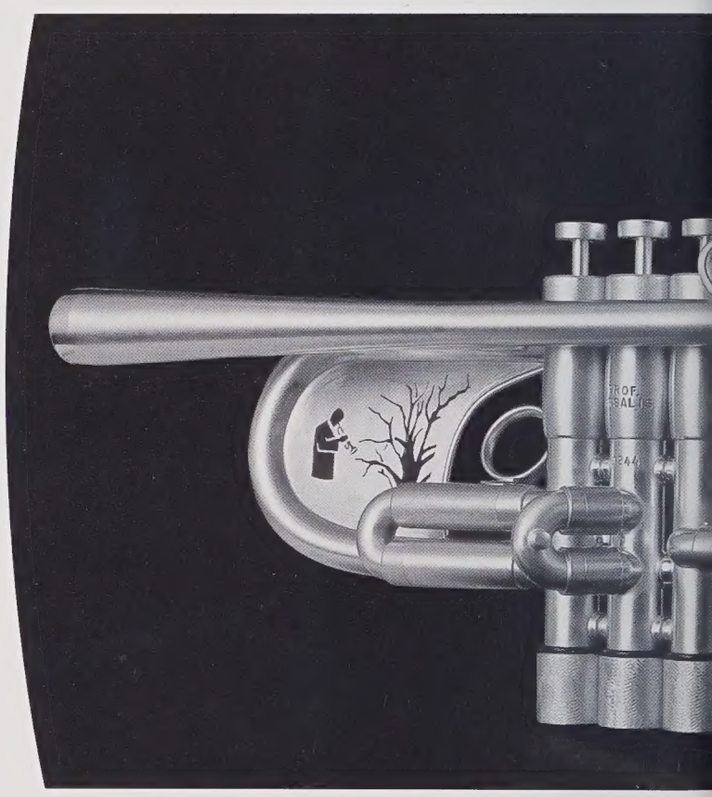
Cross braces are made from sheet brass, with tapers for bell and leadpipe matched exactly. The brace is silver soldered together in a jig. Once the back brace is soft soldered in, fabrication for the front brace is begun. Parts are cut and sanded to exact fit, the brace is silver soldered together and soft soldered on the instrument.

The bell fin is made, fit, and soft soldered into the bell crook. Fin beads are made, trimmed, and soft soldered in place. The finger hook is forged and soft soldered onto the instrument. At this point, the waterkey is soldered on and drilled. The instrument is degreased in a vapor degreaser, chemically cleaned in pickle and bright dip, then neutralized. The instrument is ragged to remove any excess solder tinning in hard to reach areas. Slides are then re-aligned to plus or minus .0005", and the instrument is satin wheeled, vapor degreased again, and inspected for any problems prior to gold plating. Then the instrument is plugged on the mouthpiece receiver to protect morse taper size. Other internal machined areas are protected with cork, rubber, or tape as needed.

Plating is copper flash, bright silver (.0005"), and bright 24k (.0001"). After plating, the instrument is inspected thoroughly. Slide alignment is checked and adjusted as needed, and final lapp of slides is performed, again with 800-grit compound. The instrument is again vapor degreased.

The valve casing is honed with a bronze mandrel and 400- and 600-grit stones. Pistons and casings are honed and fit to .0004" tolerance on a side, with consistency of OD and ID of plus or minus .0001". With these tolerances, the pistons are not hand lapped.

Next, the tuning slide is final fit and aligned, and the instrument is degreased, washed, and reassembled. Piston port alignment is adjusted with downstroke rubbers and upstroke felts. Final valve slide adjustment is then performed. The bottom and top valve caps are checked for positive threading, and the



Above
Decorated Flumpet, made for Art Farmer
Photograph by Joseph Deiss

instrument receives another visual inspection.

Finally, the instrument is play-tested for mechanical action, and then adjusted for correct pitch center both in the open instrument and through each valve and valve combination. The mouthpieces are then checked and adjusted to the instrument, and the instrument is play-tested again for up to several hours. Finally, before delivery, the instrument is disassembled and degreased, cleaned in soap and water, and reassembled. The custom-made case is inspected, and a care package of cleaning supplies and extra parts is included in the delivery package.

In general, Monette instruments are soldered together without braces or clamps, so there is no unnecessary tension between parts in the instrument. Many parts of the instrument are subject to a proprietary stress relieving process after fabrication that optimizes the crystalline structure of the material for maximum resonance and sound projection. This process also eliminates the inconsistency in temper found in some parts that have been drawn, spun, or bent during fabrication.

Decorated instruments are, of course, much more complicated to make than the above description of *production* instruments. As mentioned, coordination includes not only all the above work but also the saw piercing, stone setting, inlay work and engraving. Depending on the nature of the part, some components need engraving first, some stone-setting first, some need bezels but can't have the stones set until after solder assembly, and on it goes. This makes coordinating assembly even more complicated because, as mentioned, every alteration of a part of an instrument, such as stone-setting or piercing, changes its musical properties. Keeping tabs on the musical consequences of each decorated part during the assembly process is critical. It is especially challenging when stones are used that are temperature sensitive. Of course, they need to be set in a given brace after the brace is already part of the instrument (after soft soldering the brace). Because the sheet braces are quite thin and soft, it is critical to set the stones without bending or adding tension to the fit of the brace, which, again, has the potential to kill the resonance of the instrument.

It is hard to sum up the experience I have had with both Tami and David. Both are complex individuals and, in so being, hard to pigeonhole in the cute turn of a phrase or an overworked metaphor. I am left, at last, with some simple truths. With aesthetic alignment through communication and function facilitated by sublime form, the team of David Monette and Tami Dean can be seen as a contemporary example of the finest tradition of metalworking. Their model of enhancing the communication of others through their own inter-communication is both awe- and personally inspiring.

Gary Davidson is a metalsmith who lives and works in Eugene, Oregon.

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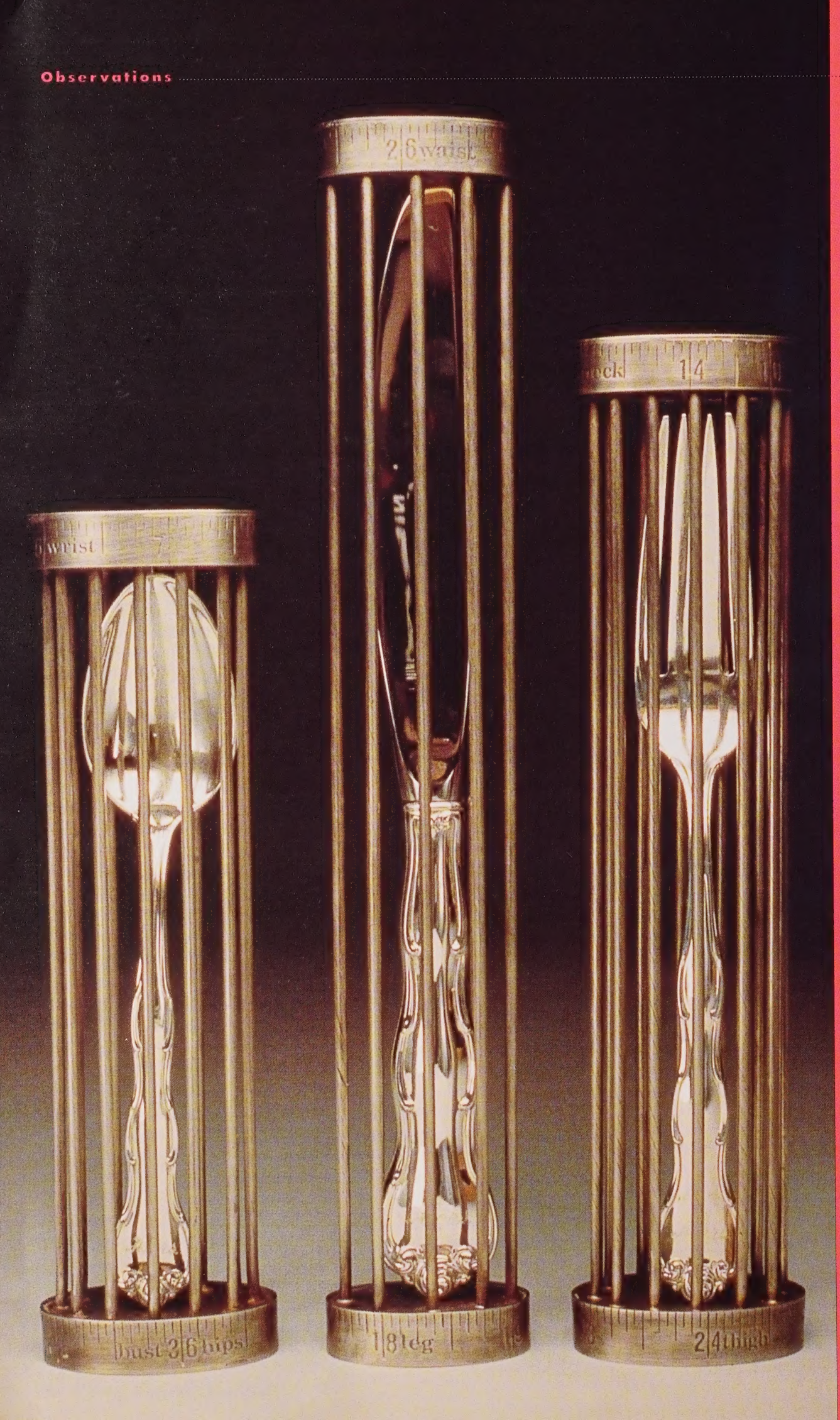


Julia Jiannacopoulos

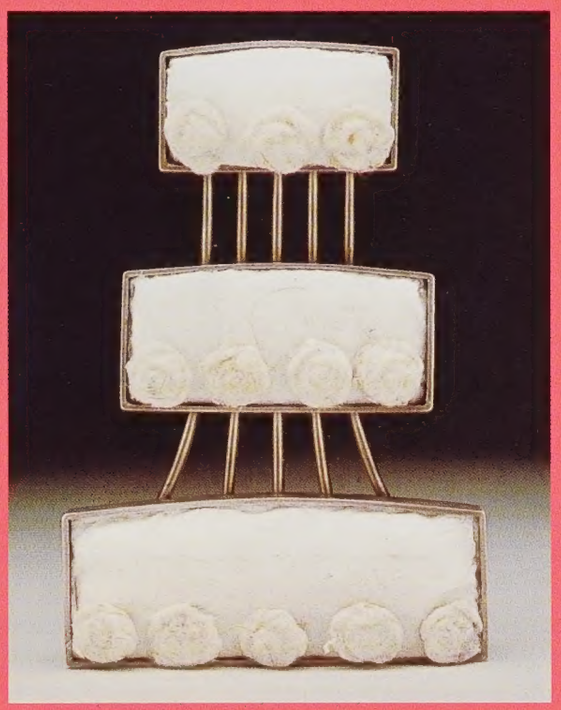
Text by Michal Ann Carley

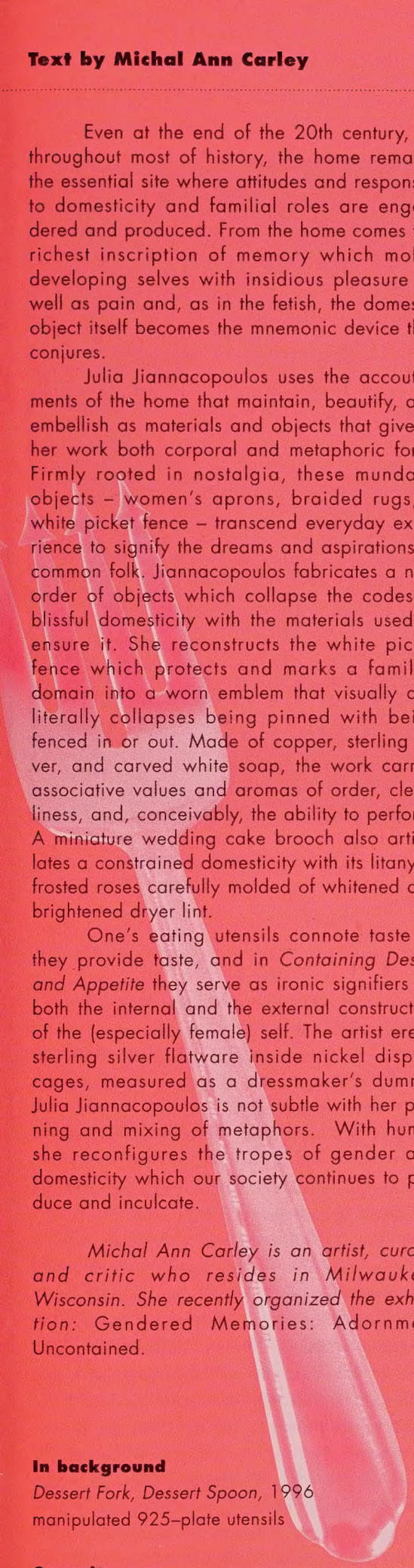
Even at the end of the 20th century, as throughout most of history, the home remains the essential site where attitudes and responses to domesticity and familial roles are engendered and produced. From the home comes the richest inscription of memory which molds developing selves with insidious pleasure as well as pain and, as in the fetish, the domestic object itself becomes the mnemonic device that conjures.

Julia Jiannacopoulos uses the accouterments of the home that maintain, beautify, and embellish as materials and objects that give to her work both corporal and metaphoric form. Firmly rooted in nostalgia, these mundane objects – women's aprons, braided rugs, a white picket fence – transcend everyday experience to signify the dreams and aspirations of common folk. Jiannacopoulos fabricates a new order of objects which collapse the codes of blissful domesticity with the materials used to ensure it. She reconstructs the white picket fence which protects and marks a family's domain into a worn emblem that visually and literally collapses being pinned with being fenced in or out. Made of copper, sterling silver, and carved white soap, the work carries associative values and aromas of order, cleanliness, and, conceivably, the ability to perform. A miniature wedding cake brooch also articulates a constrained domesticity with its litany of frosted roses carefully molded of whitened and brightened dryer lint.

One's eating utensils connote taste as they provide taste, and in *Containing Desire and Appetite* they serve as ironic signifiers for both the internal and the external construction of the (especially female) self. The artist erects sterling silver flatware inside nickel display cages, measured as a dressmaker's dummy. Julia Jiannacopoulos is not subtle with her punning and mixing of metaphors. With humor she reconfigures the tropes of gender and domesticity which our society continues to produce and inculcate.

Michal Ann Carley is an artist, curator and critic who resides in Milwaukee, Wisconsin. She recently organized the exhibition: Gendered Memories: Adornment Uncontained.





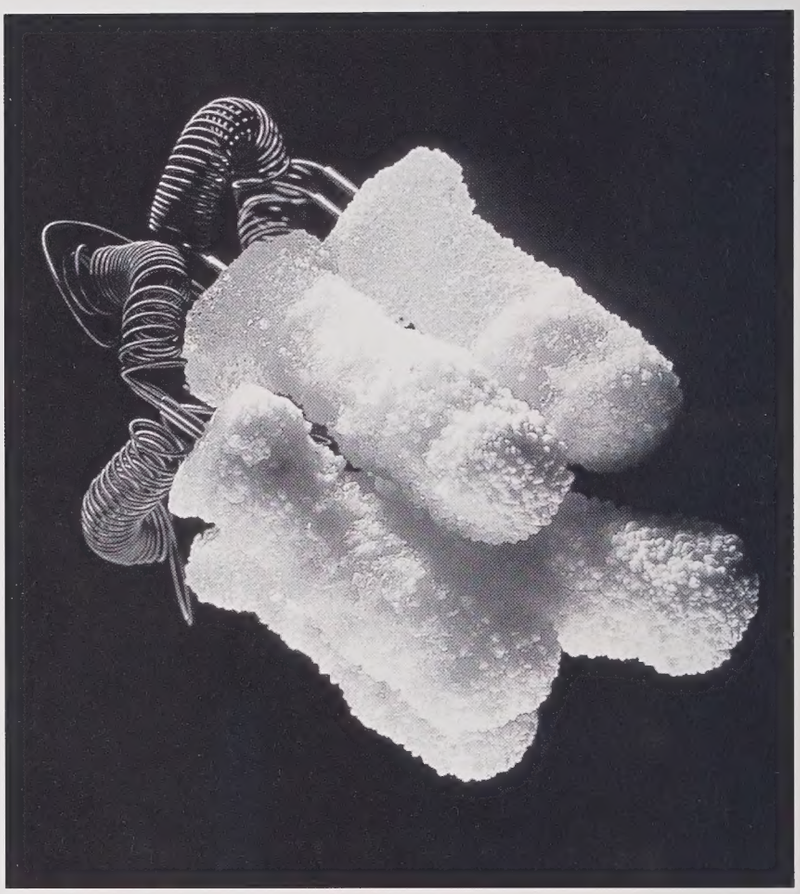
Left
American Dream Series #3, 1996,
copper, sterling, soap

Left
American Dream Series #1, 1996,
sterling, copper, lint, sheet

Left
American Dream Series #2, 1996,
copper, sterling, 14k gold, rice

In background
Dessert Fork, Dessert Spoon, 1996
manipulated 925–plate utensils

Opposite page
Containing Desire and Appetite, 1996
nickel, sterling flatware



Xanthosis (collar),
from the *Lapis Series*, 1997

Lapis: *The new work of Ruudt Peters*

Harvard Club
New York, New York
October 23, 1997

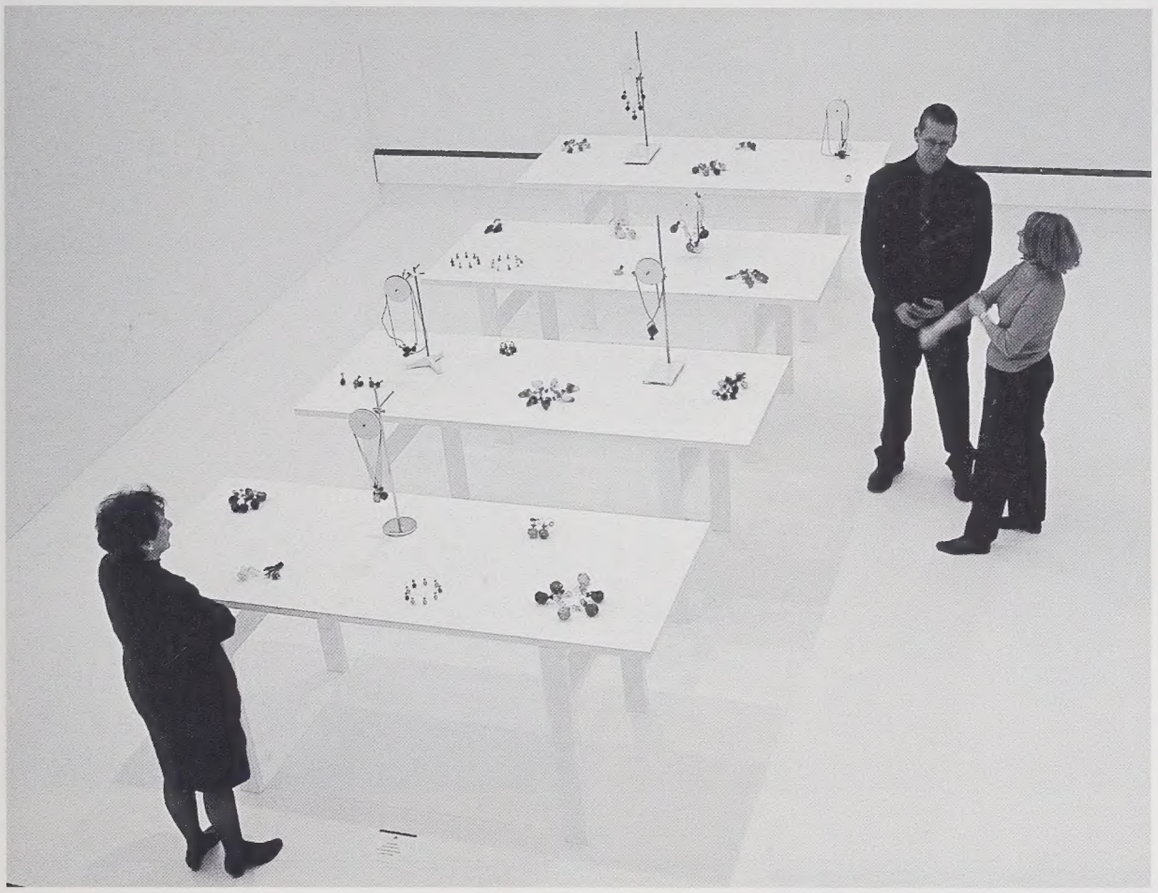
text by Anne Allen

Alchemy was once the goldsmith's Holy Grail: the ancient quest to find a means of transforming base metals into gold defined generations of early metallurgists and continues to hold metaphorical rewards for contemporary jewelers. Working with the principles of alchemy, and the teachings of early Christianity and scientific thought, European goldsmith and sculptor Ruudt Peters continues to give us the unexpected and the beautiful in an installation of his new jewelry series, *Lapis*.

The exhibition was a first of its kind, housed in the temporarily converted Squash Court #4 at the Harvard Club. Organized and curated by Malcolm Knapp, this exhibition was sponsored by the Harvard Club, the Consulate General of the Netherlands, and the Mondriaan Foundation Amsterdam, with Brinker International hosting the opening reception. The narrow, high ceilinged room was an inspired gallery stand-in, not just because it looked the part, but because in its unorthodox location it was perhaps able to reach a wider audience.

The installation was styled after a laboratory, with white tables lined up on a carefully sifted, rectangular bed of sulfur. Additional lighting was installed to supplement the overhead flourescents. Overall, the exhibition space worked, providing a surprisingly accommodating and exciting place to view jewelry. Pieces were laid out simply, either hung from metal tabletop beaker stands or placed onto the layer of rock salt that covered the tables' surfaces. Paper surgical socks were available at the entrance, presumably to protect the surface of the court from street shoes. The only difficulty with the installation as executed was that a cord running around the perimeter of the tables - there to frame the sulfur and protect it - also made artworks in the center-most areas of the tables hard to see.

Those who entered this sanctum to view the exhibition found themselves pilgrims in a strange land that smelled of sulfur and resounded with the slap of balls in adjacent courts. Scuff marks from previous matches were apparent, playing up the sense of unusual energy at work. Peters is working where the teachings of religion, science, and philosophy intersect, mining them for lessons about life's toils and longing to attain purity and immortality through all means available. He aligns the role of the artist with that of the scientist and philosopher, who seeks answers to his own nature in the most elemental forms and processes of the natural world. Peters seeks to manifest this search in his jewelry, through processes that adhere to a type of "reverse alchemy." Through pieces entitled *Lumen Novum (New Light), Rebus (Double), Pneuma (Breath), Prima Mat (First Material), Melanosis (Becoming Black),* and *Matrix*, Peters utilizes process as both allegory and as a means of redefining the essence of his materials.

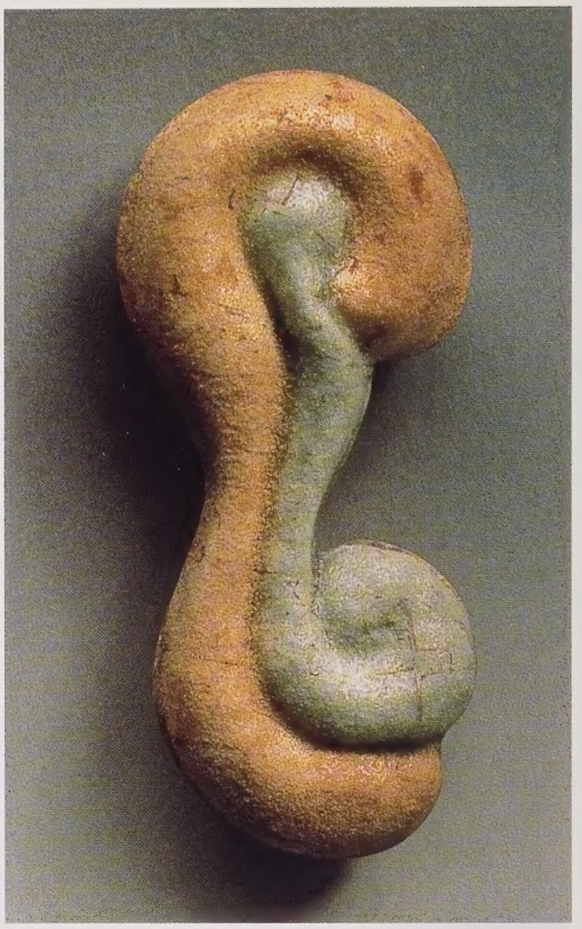


Installation, 1997
Harvard Club Squash Court #4

Like any magician, Peters only goes so far in describing the methods he uses to create his new jewels. Taking as his starting point a quote from Carl Jung, Peters works with lapis lazuli, agate, jade, tourmaline, granite and other stones reducing them into a powder. He then transforms this powdered material into new, roughly beautiful crystalline objects that become the building blocks of the pendants, necklaces, and brooches here. Many look cast from a mold, their powder suspended in unknown matrixes, yet they're so organic in nature that it becomes tempting to speculate on whether creative simulation may in fact have given way to true chemistry. Hung on shiny coils of stainless wire, these humorously sinister neckpieces resemble electrodes out of Dr. Frankenstein's laboratory or Dante's *Inferno* (as an accompanying catalog's shots would suggest). The gems are attached via extensions of these wires embedded deep in their centers, furthering the illusion of each object appearing to have been grown on the wire on which it was suspended, and causing the wearer to look as if electricity is being fed from the jewelry into their bodies.

The interplay between refined and raw materials is dynamic, the craftsmanship is distinctive, and the necklaces and pendants offer a slightly haywire, humorous aesthetic. Their significant beauty isn't meant to be elegant; the work spirals away from the body and slides around, refusing to behave. But it's hard to tell how important it is to Peters that the work be challenging to wear. Is this function significant, an intended result of the forms? Is he passing on the alchemist's struggle to the wearer? In an earlier series of rings by Peters, function is clearly integral. The substantial rings had no holes, and were instead designed to be grasped between the fingers and carried in the palm; their form was determined by how they would function. In these pieces from the *Lapis* series, these intentions are not as clear. What is evident, however, is that ownership of Peters's work carries with it responsibility as well as discovery - it's a relationship that's satisfying, and, if we're fortunate, demanding as well.

Anne Allen is a metalsmith who lives in New Paltz, New York.



Untitled (Brooch), 1994
enamel, silver, wood
3 x 1 1/2 x 2"

Shana Kroiz: Jewelry

OXOXO Gallery
Baltimore, Maryland
May 10 - June 11, 1997

text by J. Susan Isaacs

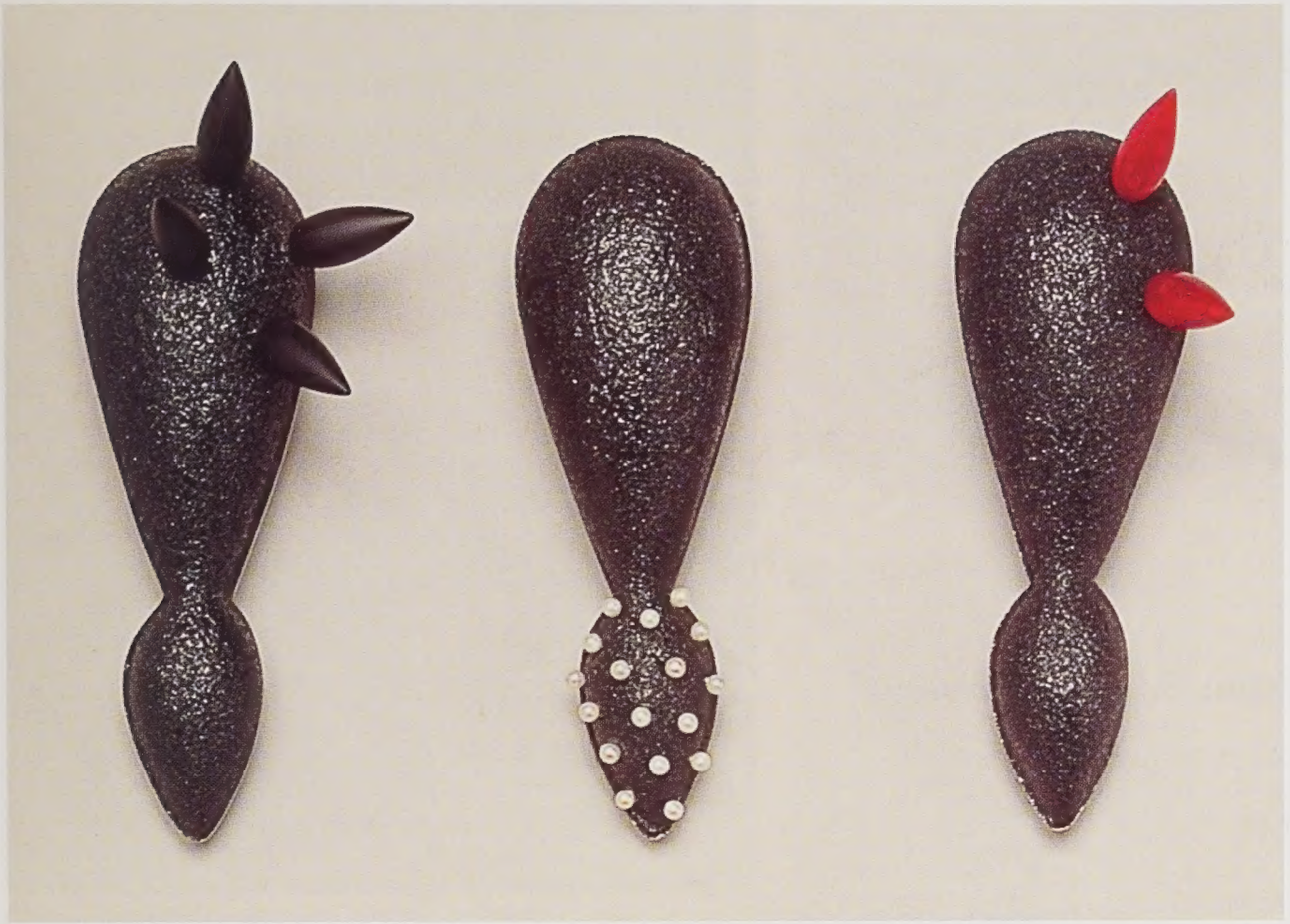
In an exhibition at the OXOXO Gallery of Baltimore, artist Shana Kroiz once again elucidated the evolving history of jewelry design. A fairly young artist who has studied with some well-known teachers in the field, including Jamie Bennett, Robert Ebendorf, and John Fix, Kroiz is the Coordinator of the Certificate Jewelry Program for the Maryland Institute College of Art in Baltimore and, more recently, became the Director of the Jewelry Center for the 92nd Street Y in New York City. In many ways, Kroiz represents the next generation of jewelry designers and her influence on those to follow has the potential to be quite significant.

Her work at the OXOXO Gallery included pieces created over the last four years with an emphasis on her recent work. In some ways the show was a retrospective of Kroiz's work from her mature student days to the present, and there is a clear variation from the earlier work to the pieces made in the last year or two. The more recent works represent a departure for the artist, one that is not yet completely realized but one that clearly holds many tantalizing possibilities.

Kroiz creates die-formed and fabricated pieces that are hand-chased and shaped by repoussé. Once the final contour in the metal is completed, she adds color using the finished metal form as a support. Painting a ceramic underglaze directly onto the metal, Kroiz follows with a clear enamel that is intentionally underfired, giving the objects' surfaces a kind of matte finish. Kroiz often mixes materials as well, adding semiprecious stones and silver details to complement the polychromed surfaces. The enamel color does not merely sit on the surface: it becomes a part of the whole and the details in some of the pieces - the semiprecious stones and silver dots here and there - contribute a kind of whimsy to the works.

Kroiz demonstrates a sophisticated understanding of color and her palette changes from piece to piece. Some of the pins are completely black, while others are multicolored with a variegated surface of analogous shades. Not all metal workers understand color and many use very limited palettes that often rely solely on the hues of the added stones. Though Kroiz's medium is enamel, she uses the material in a way that departs from much traditional enamelwork.

Kroiz's influences often originate far from the field of art and jewelry. In her more recent imagery, she looks to tools and weapons, especially such devices as axes and shields. She finds these artifacts fascinating in both their visual configurations and metaphorical content. Her earlier pieces are much more organic and more directly connected to the biomorphic shapes and undulating patterns of the

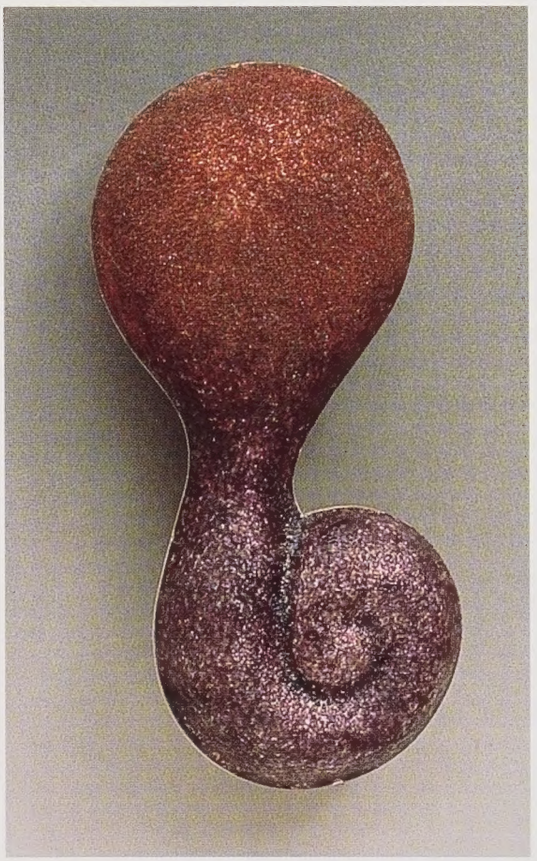


Three Brooches
enamel, silver, copper,
onyx, comeilian, pearls
3 x 1 x 1/2"

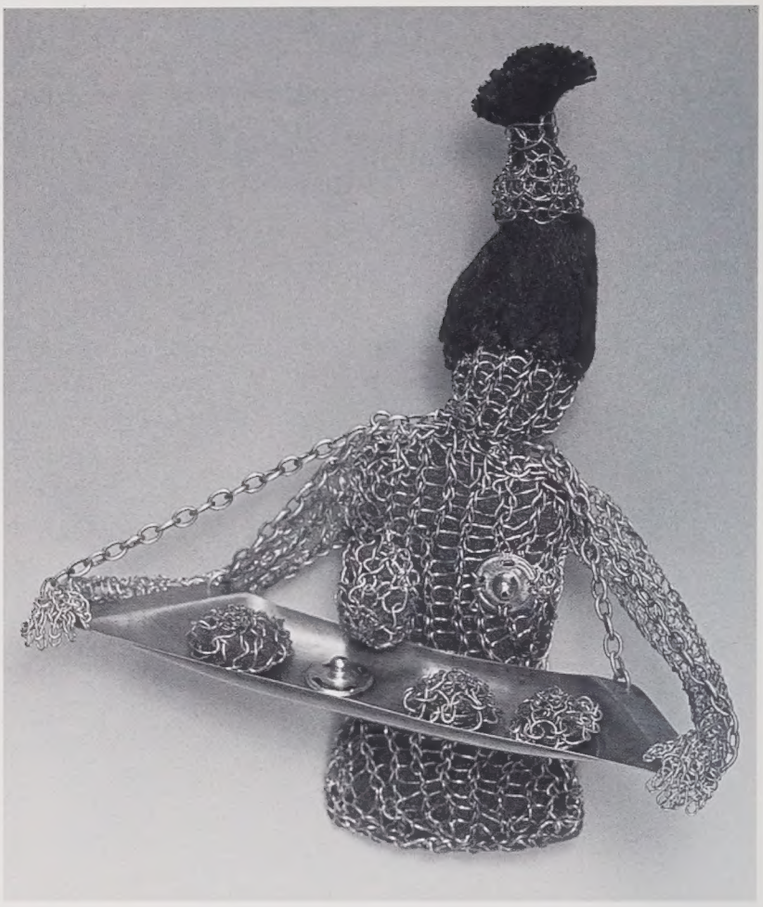
female body. While some of these constructs carry over into the newer works, she has added the complexities of the functional and the masculine associations of tools and weapons.

In all of Kroiz's work, shapes are stylized, exaggerated forms that invite the application of color. Her work enthusiastically embraces decoration, materials, and inspirations from historical sources. Fundamentally small works, they are designed for both their aesthetic richness and their wearability; and while they do share many of the considerations of sculpture, they clearly reflect a distinctly separate agenda. It is the combination of their joyous decorativeness and admirable functionality that distinguishes this artist's viewpoint. It will be intriguing to watch Kroiz's development as an artist, especially in light of her recent shift in inspiration, and to see how she will shape the generation to follow through her teaching in Baltimore and New York.

J. Susan Isaacs is an Assistant Professor of Art History at Towson University in Baltimore, Maryland.



Untitled (Brooch), 1994
enamel, silver, purple heart wood
3 x 1 1/2 x 2"



Stacking Reality (brooch), 1996
sterling, fine silver, magnet, wire,
nickel silver, cotton thread,
polyurethane mono filament
5 1/4 x 4 1/2 x 2"

Barbara Stutman: *Impaired Visions*

Galerie Noel Guyomarc'h Bijoux d'Art
Montreal, Quebec
June 12 - July 27, 1997

text by R. Bella Rabinovitz

Impaired Visions, the title of Barbara Stutman's jewellery exhibition initially prepares us for a didactic event. Fortunately, after a mere glance and an acerbic chuckle, the title also reveals its aptness as a harbinger of comedic pratfalls. For Stutman, the satirist, is unabashedly at play sending up fashion advertisements that attempt to dictate femininity. Solemnly and somewhat rhetorically, a body-wash ad affixed to the gallery wall proclaims: "What do women want? We want to be delicious." And Stutman responds with six subversive works. For example, *Is Hot Stuff Delicious?*, 1997, begs the question with a pair of exposed spool-knit silver legs and a naked bum that emerge awkwardly from a red crocheted tutu. On closer inspection the tutu turns out to be a ring, inspired by the net sponge that is featured in the ad. An artificial flower, it conjures up the vaginal imagery used in early feminist works and is in this ad seductively co-opted to serve commerce. Judy Chicago's central and once so controversial core imagery witnessed in *The Dinner Party* of 1974, must be accompanied by the naked truncated lower body of a woman to regain its power to affront and engage us in examining woman's work, as well as the imaging of women. In fact, the somersaulting legs are a detachable brooch. Set free from the nest/ring it can be worn with the legs dangling down or folded over to retain the disquieting air of sexual gymnastics. Hidden in their interiors are black peppercorns, a touch of added heat reminiscent of the heated debate that accompanied another contentious ad.

The Dior Svelte campaign also employed the lower half of a fragmented female body coyly topped by a huge bow. In one of the eight works that respond directly to this ad, *How To Package A Fantasy*, 1996, precious materials are once more spool knitted, knitted, and crocheted to give us a headless naked woman. Inspired by Chanel's Coco perfume ad a large gold bow replaces the head and a red thread dangles from her ankle. Leashed and muzzled, this delicate brooch is a broad spoof on the psychological requirements needed to be a sexy woman in our post-feminist era. Wearing this piece of jewellery would amount to broadcasting "I know what you are thinking" to any male still caught up in the fantasy of a passive woman. A beautifully crafted conversation inhibitor.

Another brooch, *Stacking Reality* offers us the only woman to keep her head. Depicted from the waist up, she is an exotic, though featureless, creature. Her black hair bounded by a red thread, she proffers a tray to the viewer. The forbidden fruit are two sets of breasts. One pert and the other sagging, they can be detached from the tray and snapped onto her awaiting chest one at a time. The viewer is the surgeon, whose emotional gamut runs from the playful deconstructing of perfect *Barbie* to the harsh reality of mastectomies.

In the twenty-five works that refuse to stay neatly in the jewellery category, Stutman explores the construction of female identity. Bound, gagged, and reduced to sexual candy containers, the women in Stutman's pieces seem totally compliant. And it is this very lack of subtlety that helps us to transcend the solemn hype and to *repair* vision.

R. Bella Rabinovitch is an art historian who specializes in contemporary art. She teaches at Marianopolis College and Concordia University in Montreal.

Rendering Visual Incentives: The Work of Heidi Nahser

Susan Cummins Gallery
Mill Valley, California
June 30 - August 2, 1997

text by Dawn E. Nakanishi

ABOVE
Hiddenite Necklace, 1997
sterling, hiddenite
approximately 18" in length

LEFT
Caged, 1997
sterling, rutilated quartz sphere
2 x 1 1/4"

The jewelry and tableware by Heidi Nahser are a fusion of memory, place, time, and culture. From her bold futuristic jewelry, to her exquisitely crafted tableware, Nahser's works reflect the structures and imagination of a twenty-first-century metalsmith, with romantic roots in the past.

Nahser's works have a contemporary edge of sparseness in their structure and material, but it is easy to recognize her appreciation of the Italian Renaissance period. Nahser spent a year studying metal arts and architecture in Florence. Most of her pieces are made in sterling as opposed to gold, alleviating the direct connection to Cellini and other ornate Renaissance hollowware. The connotations of intrinsic preciousness are further separated by her soft brushed finishes, which leaves the intricate structures of her fabricated designs easy to appreciate without the glare of high polish. In her architectural salt and pepper vessels, one pair pays homage to *The Dome* in Florence while the other is a campanile bell tower with Romanesque arches. Her love and understanding of architecture is reflected in these works. They appear as intimate sculptures to be appreciated at the table. They could have easily digressed into miniature fussy renditions of famous architecture, but these objects possess a quiet, balanced presence which invites the viewer to explore and touch.

Another pair of salt and pepper servers relates to architecture in the form of a bird cage. Nahser's interpretation of a bird cage is not a flimsy wire structure that imprisons; instead, her renditions suggest two well constructed gazebos in a lush garden. These are structures which convey their beauty rather than a foreboding message of containment. Both salt and pepper *bird cages* are suspended on opposite ends of a "T" shaped support. The middle element resembles a maypole, resplendent with encircling sterling foliage. The presence of this maypole metaphor further celebrates the concept of garden, the signaling of Spring, and the rebirth of life.

Nahser's jewelry illustrates her compelling interest in fusing medieval and renaissance elements and paring them down to simplified structures. Several of her neckpieces and bracelets incorporate chain mail. Gray oxidized sterling punctuated with rivet heads in geometric patterns elicits both a medieval and industrial feel. Stones are incorporated in much of her jewelry. Nahser selects stones that are not perfect, ones that embody their own personality through their imperfection. Her use of large beryl cabachons with visible occlusions remind the viewer of a time when stones were believed to possess curative powers. Nahser chooses to set many of her stones in large sharp prong settings resembling the talons of a bird of prey. The hint of menace in these shapes combined with the stone's scintillating light refraction communicate sensual power with an edge.

One of the central pieces in the exhibition is a pendant entitled, *Caged*. It is a three dimensional global cage of mathematical perfection. The structure, when inverted, suggests a futuristic/classical dome in Florence. This work was selected by production scouts from Steven Spielberg's summer sci-fi blockbuster *Men in Black* to be included in the film. Nahser was contracted by Industrial Light and Magic to make four identical pendants of varying sizes to accommodate the camera shots. Because the pendant is a central part of the plot, it was given the name *Orion's Belt*. The *Caged* on view at Susan Cummins houses a spherical rutillated quartz. In the movie, with the help of special effects, the pendant contains a whole universe.

This first solo exhibition by Heidi Nahser is a large and ambitious show of forty-four works. What remains constant in her work, whether jewelry or tableware, is a sensitive understanding of the weight, balance, and sensual feel of her objects. Nahser's work exhibits a rich intimate view of her experiences and a visual record of her passions. Through these objects we gain a sense of the artist's continuity of time, place, magic, and power.

Dawn Nakanishi is a metalsmith who lives in Redwood City, California.

Sondra Sherman: *Cascades*

Jewelers'werk Gallerie
Washington, DC
April 24 - May 15, 1997

text by Marjorie Simon

When artists change gears, even change directions, viewers may be challenged to follow along. At first glance Sondra Sherman's new beaded constructions may seem slight compared to her substantial, emotion-laden work of the early 1990s. Lacking the elaborate boxes, narrative content, and frank sensuality of the earlier work, these tumbling rings of wire and clear glass beads, aptly named *Cascades*, are really wearable. In fact they are all about jewelry, as if the artist took a step back to draw breath after years devoted to fabricating big statements such as the formidable *Venus and Cupid* (1991-1994). Their intellectual subtext is the theme of idealized nature perhaps best represented by 19th-century Romantic painting. Indeed, thoughtful examination reveals the froth of waterfalls, the rills of meandering streams, and all manner of water-born beauty.

Suspended on Plexiglas sheets to suggest the "controlled recklessness" of moving water, the dozen necklaces shimmer and sparkle, because every strand of wire is covered with clear glass beads, and the beads themselves are strung on chain, which, having multiple surfaces, reflects light from multiple sources.

For a metalsmith, the use of the beads is interesting. They are not merely strung, but assembled, constructed, and woven. It is not even immediately apparent that the rings of thin silver wire are threaded with beads and then soldered, then obsessively interwoven. This type of beadwork was hinted at in *Miss Havisham* (1990-91), but has been greatly elaborated upon here. Such skilled handling of metal is evidence of Sherman's decade spent with German jewelers and takes the constructions beyond the realm of traditional beadwork.

Referencing Victorian jewelry as well as German water painting, the work is decorative and even feminine in its pale linearity. One might imagine the eminent Victorian *15 Tears Necklace*, with its tiny bead-covered drops, on the bare skin of a swan-necked young woman. Most successful is *My Waterfall*, evoking not only a roiling cavalcade of splashing water but the jumble of bobbins on a lace-making stand. Sherman's aesthetic is anchored in 19th-century European romanticism, nowhere more evident than in *Caspar's Waterfall*, named for Caspar David Friedrich, an early 19th-century German painter of symbolic landscapes, whose aesthetic ideal was the painter as poet. Friedrich epitomized the Romantic sensibility once characterized by Peter Gay as an "oceanic identification with nature." Although the crude little river garnets in *Chatuga River Necklace* actually come from western North Carolina, they could be pastoral memories of the Hudson, the Thames, or the Rhine.

Herein lies a sticking point in apprehending this body of work. To her credit, Sherman wants people to use their brains as well as their eyes, to think about the meaning of objects, in this case, the meaning of jewelry. But the onomotopoetic, often alliterative titles are so encoded in the artist's lexicon that their meaning may be obscured. Stones are called "plops"; water, "drops." There's a danger the viewer won't get it. However, like many an elegant and spare line of poetry, this watery jewelry runs deep; full comprehension cannot be rushed. Having been reminded of its Romantic antecedents, we are then invited to slow down, look around, and listen for the sound of falling water.

My Waterfall (necklace), 1997
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Marjorie Simon is a writer and metalsmith who lives in Highland Park, New Jersey. She was recently appointed to be a member of Metalsmith's *Editorial Advisory Committee.*

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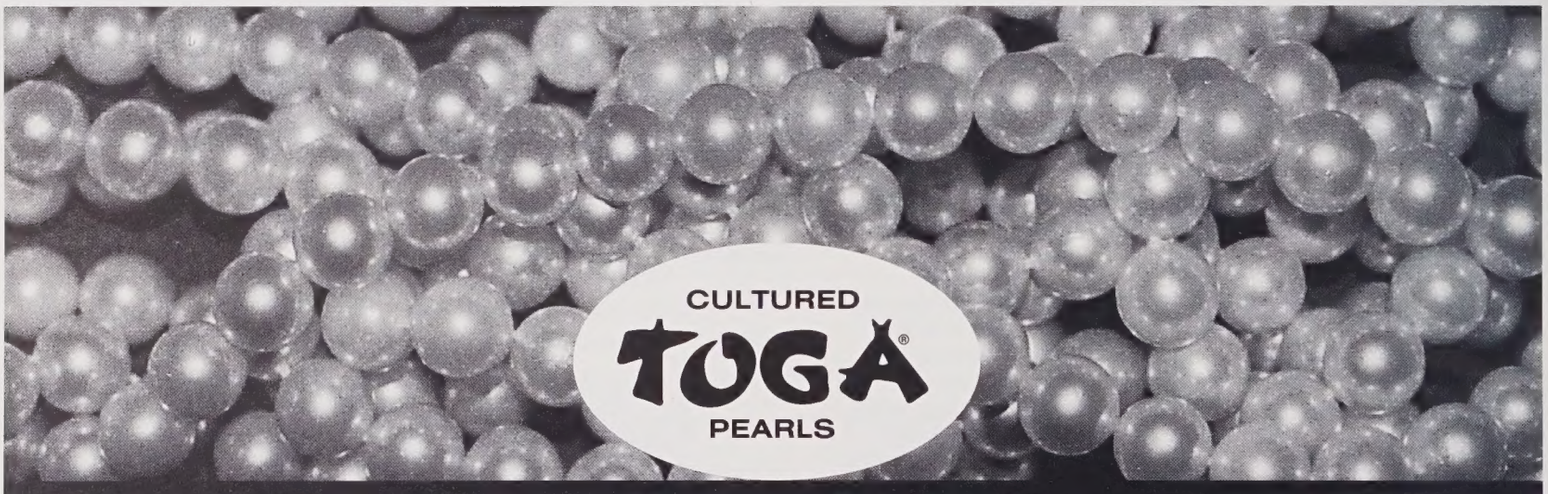

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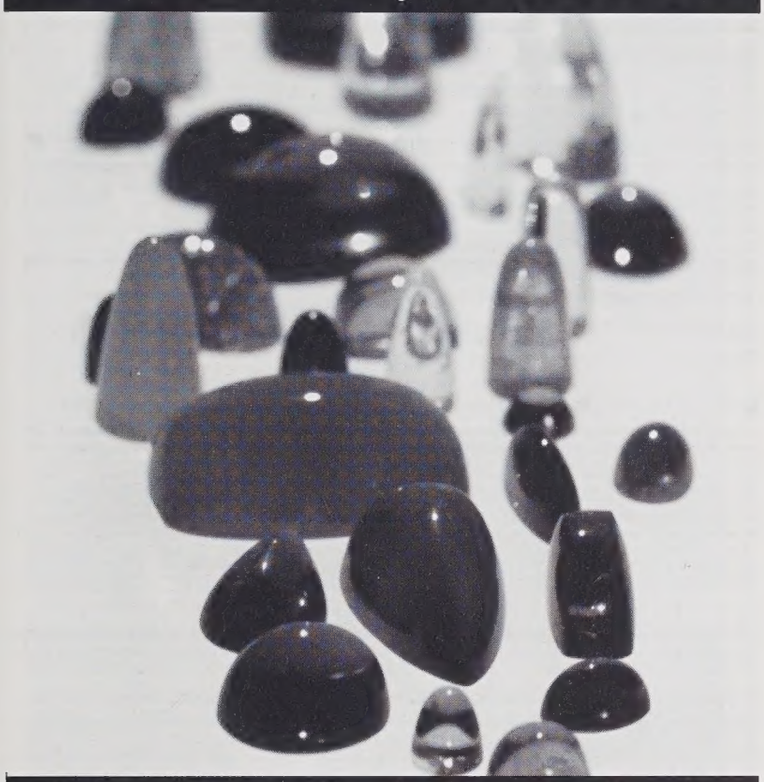

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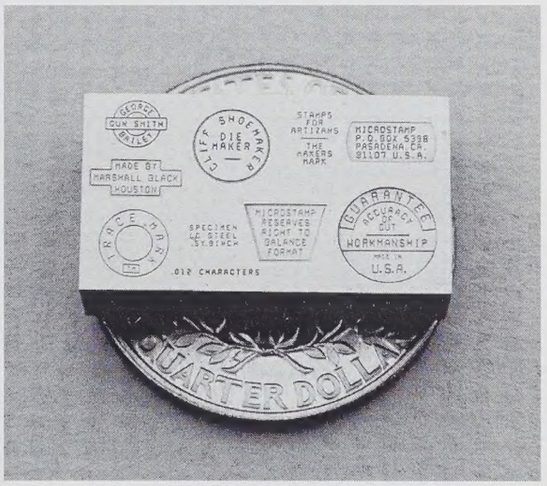

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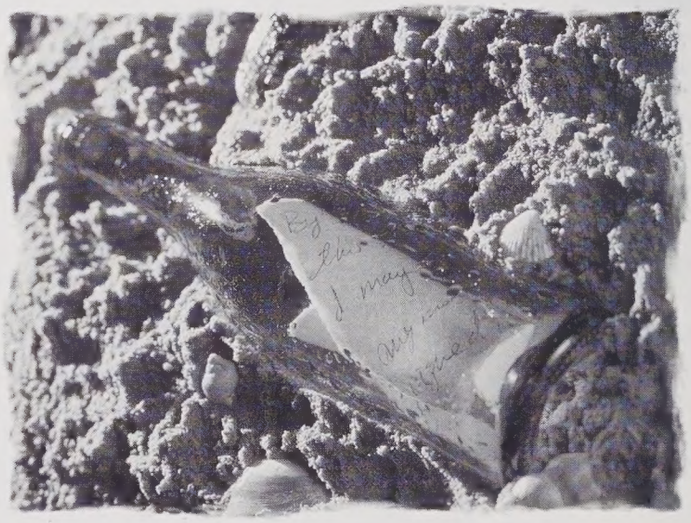

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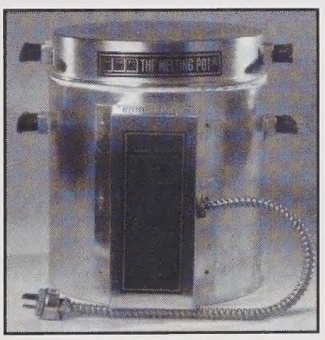

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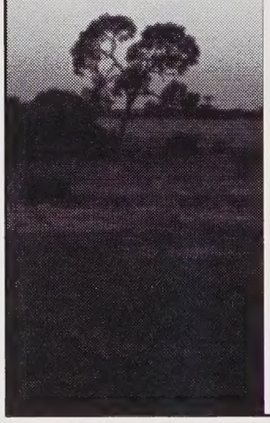

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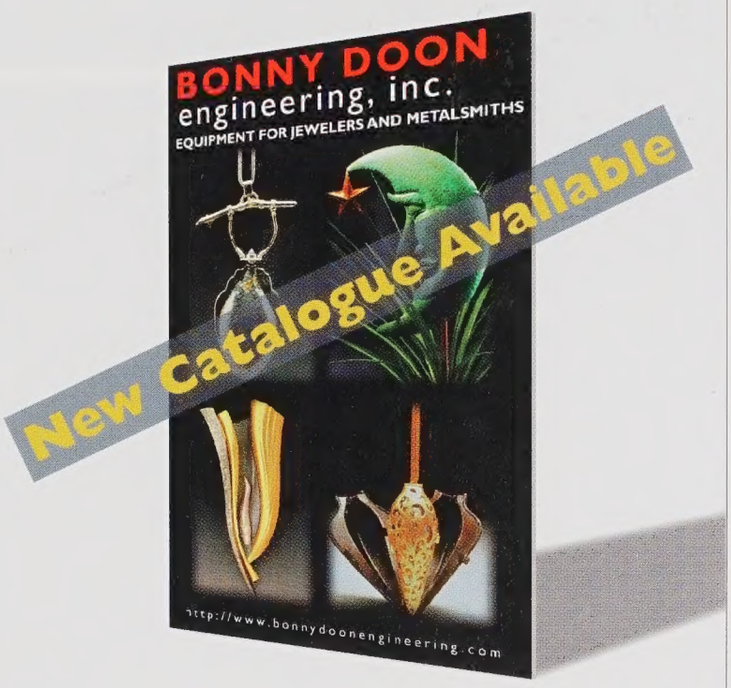

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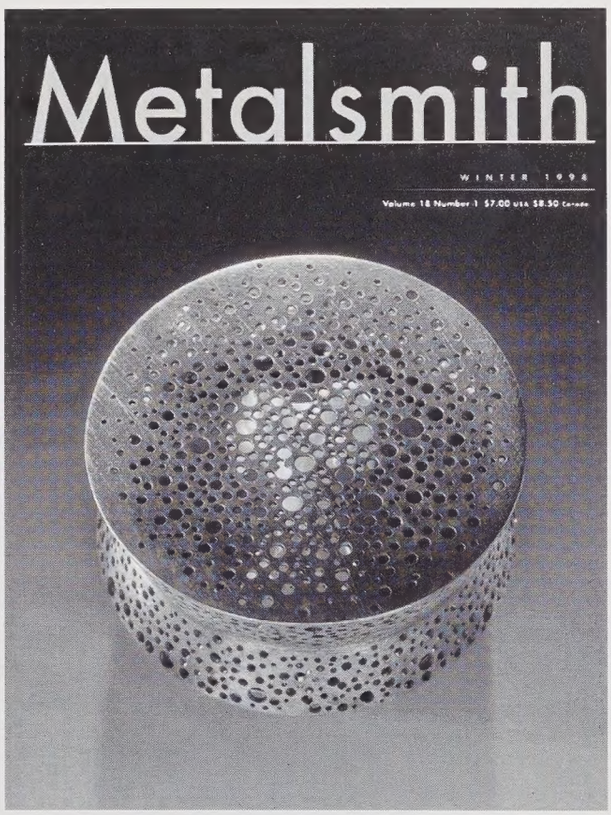

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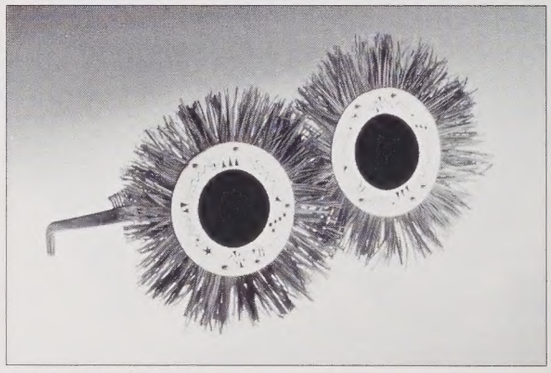

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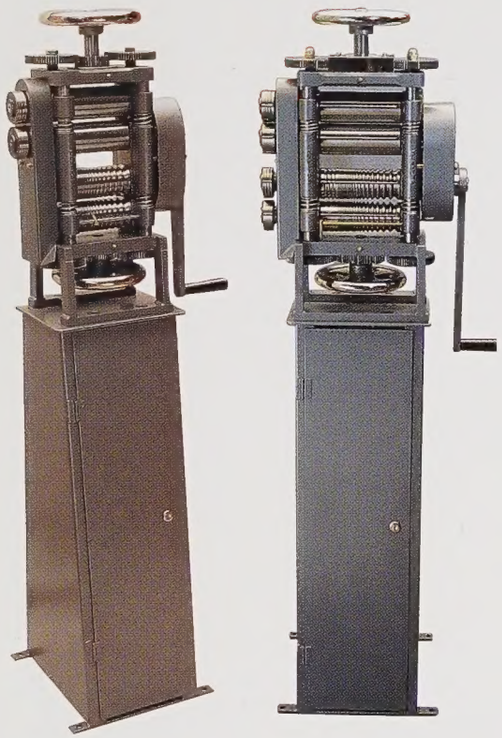

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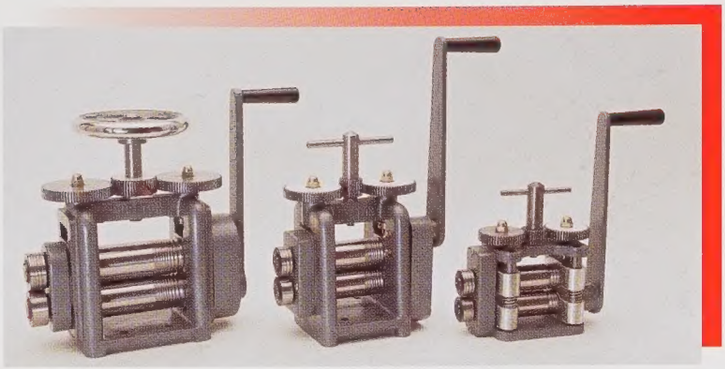

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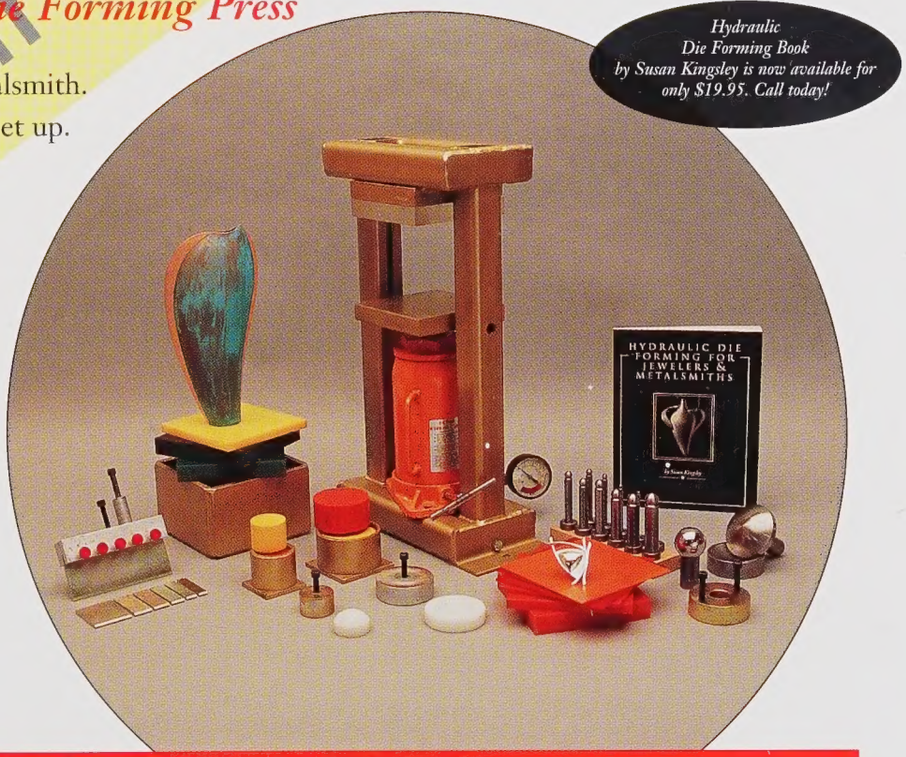
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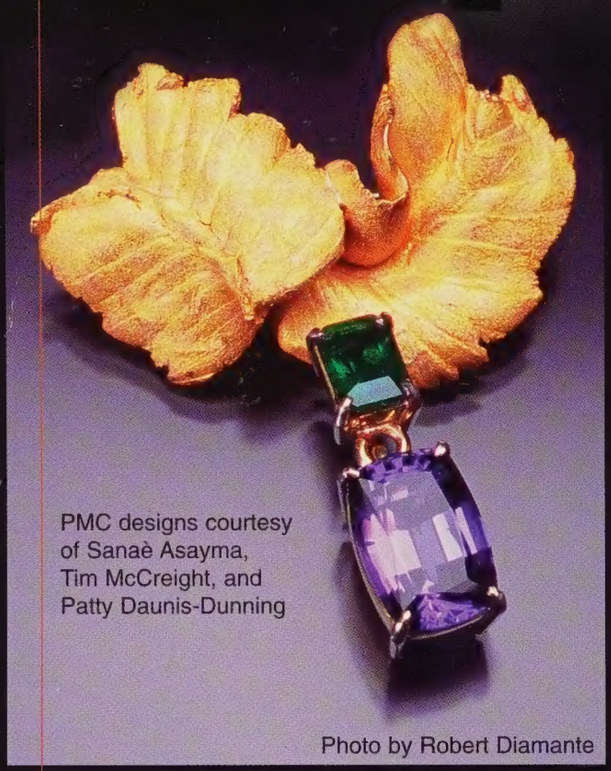

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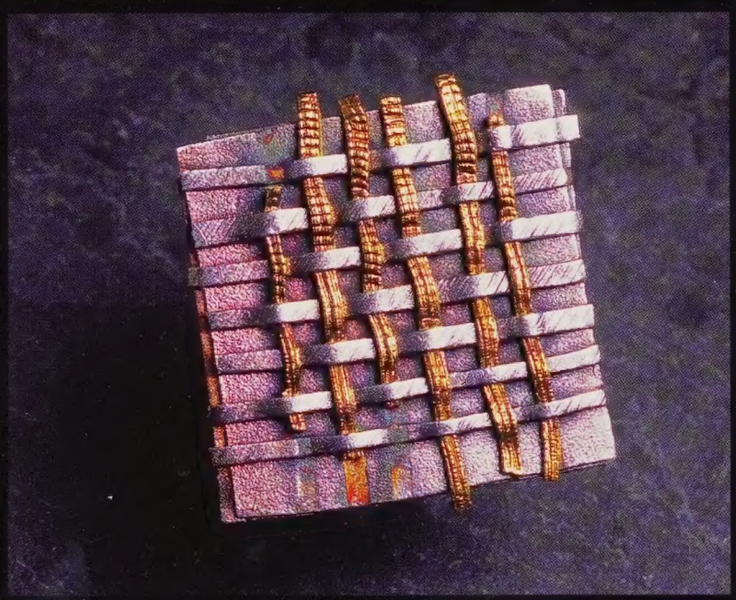

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